CANADA'S NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE UN QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING *PLATFORM FOR ACTION*

In June 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) will convene a special session to review and assess progress achieved in implementing the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA), five years after its inception. As part of the review and appraisal process, the General Assembly requested the Secretary General to prepare a standardized questionnaire to be used as a framework to identify and assess regional and international trends and best practices in implementing the PFA.

The information contained in this document constitutes Canada's response to this questionnaire. Following the format and questions in the questionnaire, Canada's response is divided into three sections. Part One highlights major achievements and obstacles encountered in advancing gender equality in Canada since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; Part Two focuses on the overall implementation of the PFA in relation to financial and institutional measures; and Part Three provides an overview of actions taken in response to the twelve critical areas of concern of the PFA. Also annexed to the end of Canada's response, is information relevant to the questionnaire provided by individual provincial governments. Each section highlights best practices and innovative programs and policies undertaken by the Government of Canada to implement the PFA.

The information gathered from this questionnaire will be used to compile a report synthesizing trends and best practices in implementing the PFA. Other sources of information such as reports of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), agreed conclusions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women since 1995, information, as well as statistics collected by the UN, its specialized agencies and regional commissions, will also be considered. The final report will be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session in the year 2000, and to the special session in June 2000.

PART I
Overview of trends[1]

Introduction

As Canada celebrates the new millennium, Canadians will also mark the 30th anniversary of the groundbreaking *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* and the 15th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which formally institutionalized women's rights and women's equality within the Canadian constitution.

Over the 30-year period since the *Royal Commission on the Status of Women*, Canada has made significant progress in the advancement of the status of women. The efforts of individuals, governments and non-governmental organizations to this end have enabled Canada to reap many social and economic rewards, which benefit all Canadians. Women and women's organizations, in particular, have been instrumental to this progress.

Despite our progress, much work remains to be done. Sizable and persistent gender gaps remain, many issues still require attention and new issues continue to emerge.

Context

Canada is a federal state comprised of 10 provinces and three territories, the newest of which, Nunavut, came into existence on April 1, 1999. The land mass of the country makes it one of the largest in the world. In spite of its size, the majority of the population lives in the southern portion of the country near the Canada-United States border.

The physical size of the country, the distribution and diversity of the population, along with the constitutional distribution of powers between the provinces and the federal government all pose challenges for governments in adopting strategies to advance women's equality.

Under Canada's division of powers, jurisdiction over some areas affecting women's lives falls to both the federal-provincial/territorial governments. In other cases, aspects fall solely under provincial/territorial jurisdictions such as the provision of social services, while others are strictly a federal responsibility, such as criminal law. Therefore, efforts to advance women's equality require a commitment and partnerships among all levels of government.

The complex and rapid changes to Canadian society brought on by demographic, social, economic, technological and political change at national and international levels provide further challenges to achieving gender equality.

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[1] The contents of this paper constitute the Government of Canada response to the United Nations questionnaire on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action*. Except where indicated, the initiatives outlined in this report have been undertaken by the federal government. The responses of those provincial governments that responded to the questionnaire are appended to the federal government's report.

In order to address these challenges, governments in Canada must explore new responses to advance women's equality, particularly through renewed partnerships with stakeholders within and outside government - at the community, regional, national and international levels.

Canada's Commitment to Gender Equality

Canadian legislation, policies and programs are subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Sections 15 and 28 of the *Charter* provide constitutional protection for gender equality. Section 15 prohibits discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Section 28 provides that the rights and freedoms described in the *Charter* are guaranteed equally to women and men. Generally speaking, the *Charter* applies to relationships between an individual and the government (federal, provincial, and territorial) rather than between individuals.

Canada is committed to advancing gender equality and women's human rights through our domestic and international activities. Canada's promotion of gender equality is based on a belief that equal rights for women are an essential component of progress on human rights and democratic development; and that sustainable and equitable development will only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal decision-makers in and beneficiaries of that development.

Along with all United Nations member states, Canada was called upon to formulate a national plan to advance the situation of women, both within its own borders and globally. *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* (1995-2000), which was presented at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, is Canada's response to that request. The *Federal Plan* is both a statement of commitments and a framework for the future, representing a collaborative initiative of 24 federal departments and agencies, led by Status of Women Canada (SWC).[2]

The *Federal Plan* documents some of the salient global and domestic issues to be addressed in the movement toward the full equality of Canadian women and men, and highlights directions to guide future federal initiatives around eight major objectives. The eight objectives of the *Plan* are linked to the twelve critical areas in the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA). They are:

- implementation of gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies;
- improvement of women's economic autonomy and well-being;
- improvement of women's physical and psychological well-being;
- reduction of violence in society, particularly violence against women and children;
- promotion of gender equality in all aspects of Canada's cultural life;
- incorporation of women's perspectives in governance;
- promotion and support of global gender equality; and

[2] The federal department, Status of Women Canada, was established in 1976 to co-ordinate policy with respect to the status of women and to administer related programs. Status of Women Canada promotes gender equality and the full participation of all women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country.

- advancement of gender equality for employees of federal departments and agencies.

In addition to the *Federal Plan*, several provinces and territories have also created action plans to implement the PFA within their jurisdictions.

Many of the specific measures taken by Canada towards the fulfillment of these objectives will be discussed in more detail in Part III of this report. Highlights of key measures which have been taken by the government include:

- a new National Child Benefit (NCB) system was implemented on July 1, 1998 as a collaborative initiative by federal, provincial and territorial governments. About half of the beneficiaries are single-parent families headed by women;
- the 1998 federal budget introduced additional funds for the Canada Child Tax Benefit, and the 1999 budget is building on the initiatives by increasing the income threshold at which benefits start;
- the 1998 federal budget introduced a caregiver credit which partially recognizes unremunerated work, more of which is performed by women;
- the inclusion of questions on unpaid work in the 1996 Census;
- development of a federal-provincial/territorial joint initiative on the development of gender sensitive indicators. In 1997, *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* was launched by Ministers responsible for the Status of Women;
- the establishment of the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program in 1996;
- launching of the Government of Canada's Women's Health Strategy, a framework to guide Health Canada in addressing biases and inequities in the health system;
- legislation on female genital mutilation, stalking, child prostitution and child sex tourism;
- strengthening of the federal *Employment Equity Act*;
- the addition of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act. This law is applied to employment in the provision of goods and services by the federal government and federally regulated businesses such as banks and airlines;
- a renewed commitment to reduce family violence through the launch of the third Family Violence Initiative in 1997;
- a $4.3 million Shelter Enhancement Program which resulted in the upgrading of existing shelters for abused women to acceptable standards, as well as to address the needs of children, older clients and persons with disabilities. Since 1995, 3,000 shelter units have been enhanced under this program;
- improvements in the living conditions of federally sentenced women;
- increasing accessibility to post-secondary education for persons with dependants and those with disabilities through the Canadian Opportunities Strategy; and
- in response to the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the federal government announced *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, which included many initiatives with an impact on Aboriginal women.

Since Beijing, rapid advances in technology, which are part of the growth of the knowledge-based economy and society, have created new opportunities and challenges for Canadians. These advances, particularly the increasing importance of the Internet, are important for women's organizations. To address this emerging issue, the federal government has created the Voluntary Sector Network (VolNet) which will enhance the voluntary sector's capacity to engage Canadians by linking 2,500 voluntary organizations per year to the Internet and to each other. Emphasis will be placed on improving access to computer equipment, network support and training.

Statistics Canada will be publishing the fourth edition of *Women in Canada* in June 2000, which will provide up-to-date statistical information on the status of Canadian women and men.

Gender-Based Analysis and Mainstreaming

The cornerstone of the *Federal Plan* is a policy requiring federal departments and agencies to conduct gender-based analysis of future policies and legislation. Gender-based analysis is a key methodology for mainstreaming a gender perspective.

Within the federal government, Status of Women Canada (SWC) leads the process of implementing the 1995 gender-based analysis policy, although individual departments and agencies have responsibility for undertaking their own follow-up.

Many of the provincial and territorial governments have also made a commitment to the integration of gender-based analysis in their policies and programs. At their 1995 annual meeting, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women supported a gender-based approach to policy development.

Key Achievements-Mainstreaming

Although the implementation of gender-based analysis in public policy is still in its infancy, Canada has made some significant gains. Examples of some key achievements made in this area include:

- the development of tools and methodologies to carry out gender-based analysis, including a guide and brochure for policy makers;
- information sessions on gender-based analysis for managers and officials;
- stimulating gender-based policy discussion through dialogue, roundtables, workshops, symposia, and conferences with governments, women's organizations and other non-governmental actors;
- contributing to the development of statistics and indicators to support gender-based analysis, such as the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators, Finding Data on Women: A Guide to the Major Sources at Statistics Canada*, and a *Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators* with an accompanying handbook; and
- development of gender-based policy research in the Government of Canada and with counterparts in other governments and international organizations.

Several departments within the federal government have undertaken specific activities to advance gender-based analysis of the policies and programs within their mandates. Some examples are:

- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has undertaken a number initiatives to integrate women's perspectives into its policies and programs through the use of gender-based analysis (GBA). For example, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Fund, additions to the Canada Student Loans Program (i.e., grants for students with dependants), and projects to facilitate the involvement of women in literacy programs address women's access to education and life-long learning. Employment Insurance includes regular and maternity/parental benefits, and an extended eligibility period for women to re-enter the labour force after child-rearing. Research and evaluation projects on child care have been supported, and a sectoral study undertaken. Income supports through the Canada Pension Plan have been essential in decreasing the percentage of older women living in poverty.

- The Department of Justice has created the Office of the Senior Advisor on Gender Equality. Major activities include: designing analytical tools to conduct gender equality analysis in the areas of litigation, legal opinion, legislative drafting, policy and program development, and management practices and policies; and developing and offering training modules on the application of gender equality in law.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has undertaken activities to ensure that its policy and strategic documents following Beijing reflected gender-based priorities and outcomes. This includes CIDA's Policy on Poverty Reduction, Strategy for Health, Basic Human Needs Policy, and Strategy for Children.

  For example, CIDA's Strategy for Health recognizes the crucial linkages between health and the promotion of gender equality by establishing specific objectives to improve women's health (including reproductive health), to target programs for the girl child and to address trauma and violence, particularly violence against women. As well, CIDA has developed a computer-based (CD-ROM) training course on gender equality for its partners.

- The mainstreaming of gender throughout Health Canada is central to the recently released Women's Health Strategy. The department's Women's Health Bureau is in the process of preparing materials and workshop curricula for gender-based analysis training within the department. The Bureau is working with a team of gender equality experts to review existing gender-based analysis materials, and prepare a framework that will lead to the development of specialised tools for the health sector.

Gender-based Policy Research

New and significant initiatives in the area of gender-based research have also been developed to support the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis. For instance, Status of Women Canada launched its Policy Research Fund following input from extensive national consultations held from March to May 1996. The primary objective of the fund is to support forward-thinking, independent, nationally relevant policy research on gender equality issues. The Policy Research Fund supports research which identifies policy gaps, trends and emerging issues, and provides concrete recommendations and alternative solutions to policies and programs affecting women. A small, non-governmental external committee, nominated by constituents, plays a key role in identifying priorities and research themes, choosing research proposals to be funded, and exercising quality control over the final research products. Policy research themes which have been explored to date include women's access to justice, women's paid and unpaid work, women's vulnerability to poverty, and the integration of women's diversity into policy research, development and analysis.

Other examples of research initiatives within the federal government which include a gender perspective are:

- The Metropolis Initiative, core funding for which is provided by a consortium of federal departments and agencies, examines immigrant integration and the effects of international migration on urban centres. A gender perspective is to be factored into all the research being undertaken, with applicability to policy development.
- The Policy Research Initiative (PRI) launched in July 1996, is mandated to build a solid foundation of horizontal research upon which future public policy decisions can be based. The Initiative brings together over 30 federal departments and agencies, including SWC, which plays an active role in ensuring that a gender perspective is incorporated into all research activities.
- In response to a study done in 1994 by the Medical Research Council of Canada, the federal government set up five Centres of Excellence in 1996 to promote much-needed research on women's health in Canada and to direct more attention to the vital health concerns of women.

Challenges/Lessons Learned in Gender-Based Analysis

Decentralization of government and devolution of federal programs and services to provincial/territorial levels have posed challenges for gender mainstreaming throughout government activities in Canada.

Further, the sectors and constituencies which play a key role in achieving gender equality are extremely diverse in their perspectives, as well as in their level of knowledge, effort and resources, which makes the systematic implementation of gender-based analysis a challenge. These stakeholders include: other federal departments and agencies, parliamentarians, provincial/territorial governments, women's organizations and other equality-seeking groups, the private sector, educational institutions, labour, and other key institutions and sectors in society.

Despite progress made in Canada on the integration of gender-based analysis and the development of tools and methodologies, there is still much to be done in order to fully integrate gender-based analysis into the work of governments. Some examples of areas where further improvements could be made include:

- enhanced accountability processes for gender analysis across government;
- enhanced policy links between governments and NGOs, such as the greater use of symposia and "think tanks"; and
- strengthened reporting and accountability mechanisms, including updates of the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* and reporting on the *Federal Plan*, and continued and enhanced information sharing with other levels of government.

PART II
Financial and institutional measures

National Budget

The federal government's commitment to gender-based analysis of federal policies and programs includes its macroeconomic policies.

Although Canada does not specifically undertake an analysis of percentages allocated to activities that advance gender equality in the federal budget, the budget remains an important mechanism through which initiatives are announced that benefit women. Some examples of initiatives announced in federal budgets since Beijing, related to the advancement of women's equality include:

- in the 1998 budget, the federal government allocated $350 million for an Aboriginal healing strategy and $126 million for new and expanded Aboriginal programs. In 1999, the federal budget allocated additional funds to strengthen Aboriginal communities by improving the First Nations and Inuit health services, and providing increased funding for home and community care to northern and Aboriginal women;
- women are the primary users and providers of health care in Canada. The increase in federal transfers and equalization payments, and other initiatives to support health care, will allow each province and territory to be more responsive to the needs of women across the country;
- the 1999 Federal Budget set aside $65 million to support new Canadian Institutes of Health Research. It is envisaged that one institute will focus on women's health;
- through the 1999 budget, the Government allocated $25 million to support the NURSE Fund (Nurses Using Research and Service Evaluation), a research program to address the challenges inherent in the changing roles and needs of nursing, a profession comprised predominantly of women;
- the 1997 Budget allocated $75 million over three years to the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, to help high-risk pregnant women have healthier babies;
- tax relief measures for low-income individuals, such as the increase in the basic personal exemption and of the general surtax, are of particular benefit to women, who tend to have lower incomes than men;
- additional funding to the Business Development Bank of Canada will allow it to expand its innovative work to promote more opportunities for women entrepreneurs;
- the Canadian Opportunities Strategy provides support for access to the skills and knowledge needed for better job opportunities and higher living standards. The strategic investment in providing financial assistance for students, helping Canadians upgrade their skills, and connecting Canadians to information and knowledge, will be particularly beneficial to women wishing to compete in the knowledge-based economy. Under this strategy, 14 million was allocated for grants to students with disabilities. This will benefit women with disabilities who have a high rate of poverty and are generally less represented in the labour force than men;

- Canadian Millennium Scholarships, announced in the 1998 federal budget, will provide 100,000 full- and part-time students who require financial assistance and who demonstrate merit with $15,000 over four years, beginning in 2000. This program will help women, particularly lone parents, to access the knowledge and skills needed for jobs in the 21st century; and
- in 1997, the federal government increased the limits on the child care expense deduction from $6,000 to $7,000 for children under seven, and from $3,000 to $4,000 for children from 7 to 16. This measure better recognizes the costs of child care faced by parents paying for full-time, full-fee care; provides additional tax relief to approximately 65,000 working families with children; and will particularly benefit women in the workforce who are lone parents.

Civil Society

Women's organizations participate in the public consultations on the annual federal budget held by the Department of Finance, or meet with the Minister of Finance and other key Cabinet Ministers, including the Secretary of State (Status of Women) to provide their input.

Outside of the formal budget process, a coalition of NGOs, including women's organizations, prepares an alternative federal budget, outlining issues they would like to have reflected in the federal budget.

Structures and mechanisms for follow-up to the PFA

Federal Plan

Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality, through its eight objectives, provides the Government of Canada with an overall framework to advance gender equality. As described in Part I of this report, the commitments in the *Federal Plan* for women's equality are wide-ranging, and responsibility for implementation is shared among many departments. It is expected that a public update of Canada's actions to implement the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality* will be published in 1999.

Several provincial and territorial governments have also developed provincial plans of action to guide their implementation of the PFA.

Although the *Federal Plan* commitments are within federal jurisdiction, the Plan refers to the importance of partnerships with provinces and territories in many areas and commits the federal government to working closely with these jurisdictions in matters such as violence against women and social security reform.

Collaboration among the federal, provincial and territorial governments is undertaken through the federal-provincial/territorial machinery of government to advance women's equality.

Since 1982, there has been a productive partnership and collaboration among the federal, provincial and territorial governments to advance women's equality through the efforts of the Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Meeting on an annual basis, Ministers have, among other things, worked together on policy issues and raised public awareness on areas of concern to women.

Involvement of Civil Society

SWC has supported numerous initiatives undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGO)s across the country in the monitoring and implementation of the *Platform for Action* (PFA). One example is the publication of a Beijing follow-up document in 1996, entitled *Take Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, a tool for women and other equality-seeking organizations to use in the monitoring and implementation of the PFA. Thirteen national organizations took the lead and collaborated with 35 national women's organizations in producing this document. Input was received from hundreds of organizations across the country. Over 1,700 copies have been sold.

In addition, SWC funded national post-Beijing meetings organized by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) in Ottawa in 1997, 1998 and 1999. The goal of these meetings was to assess how issues in the PFA have been addressed, as well as to develop strategies and processes for Canadian NGOs in the review of Beijing. A permanent Steering Committee comprised of NGO representatives from national women's organizations, to oversee all Canadian NGO preparatory activities for the UN General Assembly Special Session, was also established as a result of the meeting of February 1999.

Canada includes NGOs on its official delegation for numerous international events. For instance, NGOs have been invited, since Beijing, to serve on Canadian delegations for the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM), and other world conferences and their review meetings. In the selection process for these events, the diversity of Canadian women and women's organizations are taken into particular consideration. For example, Canadian indigenous women have been members with regular frequency on several delegations, including the UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 1996; the UN Commission on Sustainable Development; and the Madrid Workshop on UN Biodiversity Convention/Traditional Knowledge, 1997.

PART III

Implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing *Platform for Action*

I. Women and poverty

Women's poverty is inextricably linked to their overall position in the economy - in particular, the gendered division of labour whereby women perform the majority of unpaid work, especially for children and other dependants, and their employment is often in lower-paid, less secure occupations and sectors than men's. Both the initiatives outlined in this section and the Women and the Economy section to advance economic equality overall contribute to reducing the incidence and depth of poverty among women and children.

In 1995, women were 51% of the population in Canada, yet made up 58% of people living below Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs). The LICOs are a relative income measure that take family and community size into account. It is these cut-offs that are commonly understood as a poverty line and used to determine poverty rates. Among all women, 19.5% lived below the LICOs in 1995.

Family type and age are two of the most significant determinants of poverty for women in Canada. Lone parents, especially teenage mothers and elderly women who spent much of their adult lives caring for their families, are at greatest risk of poverty. The poverty rate for families led by lone-parent mothers rose from 57.2% in 1995 to 61.4% in 1996, with declining employment being a key factor.[3] And although poverty rates for both women and men over 65 have dropped significantly since 1980 (68.7% to 45.4% for women and 57.8% to 29.3% for men), senior women are still at considerable risk. Additional risk factors are faced by women who are Aboriginal, immigrants, members of visible minorities, have disabilities or have been abused.

While women's overall participation in the paid labour force is now very close to men's, women often have more limited access to better-paid, higher-skilled and growth sectors of the economy. Access to education and training, particularly in non-traditional and expanding fields of study, is therefore imperative for women's economic autonomy in a competitive, rapidly changing labour market. For a detailed description of the federal government's initiatives to enhance women's access to higher education see the Education and Training section, as well as initiatives listed in Part II under the section, National Budget.

The Government of Canada recognizes the critical link between women's and children's economic well-being. Providing support for families with children and other dependants, especially those with low-income, is a priority and a number of recent initiatives towards this objective are highlighted below.

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[3]Statistical Sources: National Council of Welfare. *Poverty Profile 1996*; Statistics Canada, *Income Distribution by Size in Canada 1995*.

Child Support Reforms
Begun in May 1997, the new regime to assist families following separation and divorce includes: 1) guidelines to ensure fair and consistent child support awards; 2) changes to the tax treatment of child support payments -- a long-awaited request from women's groups; and 3) improved support enforcement mechanisms. These measures are of particular importance to women as they are the majority of custodial parents.

A fourth element of the reform package of particular importance to lone-parents was an increase in the income supplement available to low-income, employed parents as part of the child benefit system. Overall, average income figures for 1997 show that while the situation of two-parent families remained unchanged from 1996, lone-parent families headed by women saw their incomes rise by 4.1%, as higher employment earnings were accompanied by increased child benefits. For those female-led lone-parent families who were living in poverty, the depth of poverty also lessened somewhat.

Commitment to Further Action/New Initiatives
- A review of the child support regime is scheduled for 2001.

National Child Benefit (NCB) System
Established in July 1998, the NCB system is a federal-provincial/territorial initiative designed to support low-income families and reduce child poverty. The federal government provides increased income support to these families, through the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), while provinces/territories develop programs and services targeted to low-income employed parents and their children. These programs and services include childcare services, health benefits, etc. About half of the NCB beneficiaries are single-parent families headed by women, the other half being two-parent families. The 1999 federal budget proposes to further build on the NCB by increasing the income threshold at which benefits start to be reduced from $25,921 to $29,590 at a cost of $300 million.

The goals of the initiative are to:
- help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty;
- promote parental attachment to the paid work force; and
- reduce overlap and duplication between Canadian and provincial/territorial programs.

Under the previous system, some families were actually worse off when parents increased their employment income and no longer received social assistance because they lost special types of income support, benefits such as dental care, and other services for their children.

The NCB begins to address this situation. It does this in part by restructuring programs and services to ensure that all low-income families with children receive comparable income support, benefits and services. As families leave social assistance for paid employment, they continue to receive financial support to assist with their children and child-related costs of employment. Overall income support to families on social assistance remains at least the same as it was prior to the implementation of the NCB.

As federal funding for income support for families with children increases, provinces and territories have agreed that savings realized will be re-invested in complementary programs to improve attachment to the paid labour force, benefits and services for low-income families with children. Provinces and territories have announced innovative child benefit programs that reduce the gap between what social assistance recipients and employed parents receive, including: income support programs; earned-income supplements; and in-kind benefits (e.g., health/dental benefits) as well as child care and programs for families/children at-risk. Given that there is substantial movement of many families between social assistance and employment, this will provide more security for all low-income families with children.

Aboriginal people living on reserves will also benefit from re-investment savings under the NCB, and work is underway to improve access of First Nations families to the CCTB.

Examples of Obstacles/Lessons Learned

- One of the key challenges was to better harmonize the federal child benefit system with programs in the provinces and territories. Discussions have enabled the federal government and provinces/territories to better understand each other's systems and make the necessary adjustments.

Commitment to Further Action/New Initiatives

- The second phase of the NCB will be implemented in July 1999 and July 2000. The federal government will further increase its assistance to low-income families by $850 million (as well as the $300 million to increase the income threshold at which benefits start to be reduced), bringing the total of recent increases to $2 billion. The provinces/territories will improve their existing programs and/or develop new ones.

Measures to Assist Caregivers

Many Canadian women provide care and support to family members who are seniors or who have disabilities. The tax system includes various measures to assist caregivers and supporting individuals. These include the disability tax credit, medical expense tax credit and the infirm dependant credit. In 1998, a new caregiver credit was introduced to provide tax assistance for individuals residing with and providing in-home care for a low-income parent, grandparent or infirm, dependant relative. This new measure will provide approximately $120 million in tax assistance to about 450,000 caregivers.

Supports for Older Women

The Government recognizes that public pensions have been essential in reducing poverty among older women.

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) reflects this understanding through provisions such as the child-rearing drop-out provision, credit-splitting and full indexation of benefits. These features, which are seldom available in private pension plans, recognize that women's patterns of unpaid work, employment, unemployment and remuneration are significantly different from those of men.

These features were maintained during pension revisions, such as rate increases, that were necessary to ensure the CPP's financial sustainability. They are currently being examined as a second stage of the review to ensure that the CPP continues to meet the needs of Canadians in today's realities.

The other key parts of Canada's retirement income system, the Old Age Security program (OAS), the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and the Spouses Allowance (SPA), have also been maintained. The GIS and SPA provide assistance to those with little or no other retirement income and are particularly important for women, who are 65% of GIS recipients and 91% of SPA recipients.

Support for Aboriginal Women

- In January 1998, the Government of Canada launched *Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, a comprehensive long-term plan to develop healthy, more self-sufficient and economically viable Aboriginal communities.

- *Gathering Strength* sets out commitments under four themes: renewing partnerships; strengthening Aboriginal governance; developing a new fiscal relationship; and building strong communities, people and economies. The aim of this integrated agenda is to improve living conditions, develop employment-related skills, promote economic development and develop capacity for good governance and accountability.

- Aboriginal women living in poverty benefit from the integrated and numerous *Gathering Strength* initiatives, particularly:
  - development of a framework for welfare reforms focusing on economic development and job creation;
  - an Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy which includes labour market programs and child care;
  - an Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative to increase recruitment, employment, retraining and promotion of Aboriginal people; and
  - increased funding for housing on reserves, water and sewer projects.

- Canada has undertaken research and development of supports for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Programs include Aboriginal Business Canada, the Opportunities Fund, Aboriginal Business Development Centre, Canada's Aboriginal Youth Business Strategy and the Aboriginal Export and Trade Directory. This is particularly beneficial to Aboriginal women as their growth in self-employment is double that of women generally (Industry Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada: Progress & Prospects*, 1998).

Research and Data Development

The Government of Canada has provided financial support for gender-based policy research in the area of women's poverty. Through Status of Women Canada's Policy Research Fund, a number of research projects have been supported which examine the issue of women's poverty. These include:

- **Social Policy, Gender Inequality and Poverty** by Lorraine Davies, Julie Ann McMullin and William R. Avison;
- **The Changing Nature of Home-care and its Impact on Women's Vulnerability to Poverty** by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women -- Lise Martin and Marika Morris;
- **Reducing Women's Poverty: Policy Options, Directions and Frameworks** by E. Jane Pulkingham and Gordon W. Ternowetsky, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;
- **Reducing Poverty Among Older Women: The Potential of Retirement Income Policies** by Monica Townson; and
- **The Dynamics of Women's Poverty** by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), Katherine Scott, Jean Kunz and Spyridoula Tsoukalas.

Statistics Canada continues to produce reports on male-female earnings gaps. As well, most income-related outputs include data for men and women separately, where this is appropriate. Further, there is a great deal of emphasis on female lone-parent families in the analyses when results on low income or income distribution are released.

International Activities

Canada provided financial assistance for the Inter-American Workshop on Intellectual Property Rights for Indigenous Women, held in Ottawa on April 21-24, 1999, with participation by indigenous women from twenty countries. The Workshop was convened by the "Indigenous Women of the Americas," an international organization established on the initiative of Canadian indigenous women's organizations, to improve the socio-economic and legal situation of indigenous women throughout North and South America.

A key Canadian objective for the World Food Summit in 1996 was the integration of a gender perspective in all development and economic activities. Equal access to education, credit and the ownership of land are critical if women are to fully contribute to poverty reduction and food security.

In Cameroon, through the Canadian International Development Agency, a micro-credit program for rural women's groups involved in agricultural production/processing and fish farming has taught rural women entrepreneurship and provided credit. In Colombia, the Calmeadow Foundation of Canada has provided training workshops and a revolving fund to assist micro-entrepreneurs in low-income communities. Women are 60% of borrowers in this program, and their increased participation is being encouraged.

2. Education and Training

Education is key to women's equality. It has a profound impact on women's access to employment and on women's economic independence. The changing nature of employment in Canada and elsewhere requires Canadians to be prepared to make several career changes during their adult lives. As well, the emergence of the knowledge-based economy and society in Canada has made women's access to education and training even more imperative as technical and scientific fields become the key elements for growth.

During the past 15 years, women in Canada have experienced a notable shift in education levels: among women aged 20-29, the proportion with post secondary degrees or diplomas increased from 37% in 1981 to 51% in 1996, compared to an increase from 37% to 42% for men. Women have increased their representation among university graduates in both female-dominated programs (60% or higher enrollment of women) and male-dominated programs (60% or higher male enrollment). As well, the proportion of women with less than a high school education dropped from 28% in 1981 to 16% in 1996 (1996 Census Data).

Still, much work remains. Women only account for approximately 28% of university students in mathematics and sciences, and for 18% of students in engineering and applied sciences, key growth areas in the knowledge-based economy and society. As well, although women and men participate at an almost equal rate in training programs, women actually receive substantially fewer hours of training than men, a pattern which continues to rise.

In Canada, responsibility for education rests primarily with the provincial governments. All levels of government recognize the importance of improving women's education and training opportunities as being central to improving their employment opportunities and subsequently, their economic well-being. In the *Federal Plan*, the Government of Canada has outlined a strategy, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, and women's organizations, which focuses on improving women's access to lifelong learning, supporting and encouraging women's participation in the fields of science and technology, and developing appropriate training materials and programs for women. Examples of initiatives which have been undertaken include:

Post-secondary education

The Canadian Opportunities Strategy (introduced in the 1998 Budget) will be of particular importance to women in gaining access to knowledge and skills. Women represent more than 50% of university and community college students. Initiatives included in the Canadian Opportunities Strategy are:

- income-sensitive measures to help students manage their debt from Canada Student Loans; and
- child-care expense deductions and education tax credits for part-time students, many of whom are women.

The Canada Student Loan Program provides assistance to eligible students attending post-secondary institutions. A number of provisions are relevant to women. Fifty-five percent of full-time Canada student loan borrowers are women, and there is no upper age limit for Canada student loan eligibility.

- Canada Study Grants for high-need part-time students are designed to provide assistance for low-income students, such as sole support mothers, who must study part-time;
- Canada Study Grants for female doctoral students are designed to assist female students in certain PhD programs in which women are traditionally under-represented;
- new Canada Study Grants for students with dependants were implemented August 1, 1998. This initiative will promote accessibility to post-secondary education by helping these students better afford to continue their studies; and
- under the Canada Student Loans Program, the need assessment allows child care costs to be assessed for both full- and part-time loans.

Canadian Millennium Scholarships

Through an endowment fund of $2.5 billion, the federal government will provide scholarships to 100,000 full- and part-time students who are in need of financial assistance, and who demonstrate merit, commencing in 2000. This initiative will help low-income students to access post-secondary education. In particular, this program will assist female lone parents who have lower-than-average income levels access post-secondary education.

Learning Technologies

Through the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), the Government of Canada provided support to the Pan-Canadian Women and the Internet Conference, held in the fall of 1997. The conference had a strong focus on how to learn about women's equality issues, using the Internet. OLT sponsored the Women's Ways of Learning Workshop that highlighted the work of women and women's organizations that have been addressing these issues.

Another OLT initiative, The Janus Project, raised awareness about the challenges and opportunities which learning technologies present to women. Researchers gathered data, published a discussion paper, and held a workshop on technologies and women's learning. Findings provided a broad socio-economic analysis of the impact of technologies on women's learning. They were integrated into a discussion paper outlining trends, issues and areas for further exploration. This paper provided the background for a workshop in the spring of 1997 that brought together about 100 representatives from women's literacy and adult education organizations, unions, industry and government.

Women in Science and Technology

The federal government is also committed to supporting and encouraging Canadian students, particularly women, to achieve excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and to choose careers in science. In 1996, women accounted for 34% of all university science and technology graduates in Canada, up from 28% a decade earlier. Studies in the early 1990s identified many of the obstacles to the advancement of women in these careers and provided recommendations for action.

Federal and private sector funding was announced in 1996 for the creation of five Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering at different Canadian universities across the country. The role of the Chairs includes encouraging female students in elementary and secondary schools to consider careers in science or engineering, and promoting the integration of women students in universities.

Literacy

The **National Literacy Secretariat** (NLS) works to ensure that Canadians have opportunities to develop the literacy skills they need to manage in everyday life. The NLS supports projects in five mandated areas of activity: the development of learning materials; public awareness; literacy research; improved co-ordination and information sharing; and improved access to literacy programs. Within the scope of this mandate, the NLS supports projects which facilitate the involvement of women in literacy programs. Some examples of such projects, for the period of 1995 to the present, include:

Montreal YM/YWCA was funded to research and develop a bilingual literacy program designed for women learners;

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women received support for a project to research and assess the relative merits of different approaches to serving women's needs in a literacy program. It is conducting research into the effects of abuse on literacy learners and is examining ways of creating more appropriate learning practices for abuse survivors;

The Regina Chapter of Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan received funding to research and develop a literacy entrepreneurial skills program model and curriculum for immigrant women;

The Women's Network Inc. of Prince Edward Island will prepare health education materials in plain language for adult learners, health education curriculum for adult educators and a plain language resource guide to health information for adult learners;

Le Réseau national d'action- éducation femmes will develop and produce literacy exercise booklets which target the needs of francophone women. The booklets will be distributed to practitioners in the francophone community across the country for integration into their literacy programs;

The Edmonton John Howard Society received support for the research phase of a project aimed at determining effectiveness of literacy and life skills integration programs for women in conflict with the law;

Canadian African Women's Organization received support to develop literacy activities designed to encourage women from Africa and the Middle East to acquire the skills they need to deal with their social and economic marginalization; and

The Provincial Association Against Family Violence received support to develop and hold a series of family literacy workshops for mothers who are or have been residents of transition houses in Newfoundland. The workshops demonstrated ways in which mothers can help their children develop literacy skills. A tutor-training guide and a program model were developed for women interested in setting up family reading circles in their communities.

Support to Civil Society

The Government of Canada has provided support to a range of NGOs to undertake initiatives in the area of education and training, including:

- the **Women's Inventors Project Inc.**, which conducted a series of workshops for women with children and leaders in non-governmental organizations, and a public awareness campaign to increase knowledge and understanding about why activities and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are important for girls and young women;
- ***Les Scientifines*** piloted a project involving girls ages 9 to 12, their mothers and teachers from five schools in Montreal in order to stimulate interest in non-traditional occupations and careers in science and technology;
- in Saskatchewan, funding was provided in support of a conference entitled **Women and Other Faces in Science** and an affiliated project entitled **A Day of Science for Girls**. This multi-component project also included an essay contest for girls and a video production of the conference;
- **Working for Women in Saskatoon Incorporated** received funding for the development of a Freenet/Internet workshop to help women access the information highway in order to enhance their marketability in a changing workplace, and to promote their economic autonomy;
- the ***Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique*** is working with the newly created Francophone School Board of British Columbia to develop a gender-sensitive French-language teaching guide to support a non-sexist learning environment in the French-language education system. The School Board will submit to its Board of Trustees a policy that will commit its teaching methods to those described in the guide; and
- in Quebec, funding was provided in 1998/99 to the ***Centre d'intégration au marché de l'emploi*** for a project aimed at promoting education in non-traditional, science and technology areas for women. Workshops will serve to sensitize up to 2,000 young women in the Estrie region, and also reach guidance counselors, teachers and parent associations.

International Activities

At the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in Geneva in July 1998, three indigenous women teachers from Canada, as members of Canada's official delegation, organized and hosted a workshop on indigenous education and training, with financial and policy support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). The Canadian workshop supported the designated theme of Education for the 1998 WGIP, as one of the principal themes of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

DFAIT coordinates the Youth International Internship Program (YIIP), which is designed to provide youth with career-related, internationally focused work experience. Since 1997, women have comprised 55% of the participants in the program. The program has placed hundreds of women, including young indigenous and visible minority women from across Canada, in international training and intern positions in multilateral, regional, private- and public-sector organizations around the world. The selection criteria focuses particular attention on the recruitment of women, and indigenous and visible minority youth. The program also placed interns with organizations working on indigenous and ethnic issues.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has supported the Training Fund for Tanzanian Women Project which aims to increase the number of qualified women capable of assuming responsibility and decision-making in the public, private and NGO sectors in Tanzania.

3. Women and Health

Physical, emotional and social well-being at all stages of life are key to women's equality. While female life expectancy remains high in Canada, this positive indicator is offset by other realities, such as violence against women and the increasing care needs of an aging population. Women's longer life span means they often spend their relatively healthy senior years caring for an older spouse/partner.

Health Reform

Renewal of Canada's health system is a priority of the Government of Canada. Civil society and representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments participated in three conferences in early 1998 to examine home care, pharmacare and health infrastructure.

A Health Reform Reference Group, comprised of members from each of the five Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, has begun to document how health reforms, particularly in the area of privatization, have been implemented in various regions of the country. The reference group is focusing on the effects of these reforms on women as healthcare users and providers (paid and unpaid). The group is especially concerned with ensuring that there are ongoing strategies for documenting and monitoring health reform, and its implications for women.

Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program

In 1996, the Government of Canada established the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program. Five research centres are mandated over six years to conduct policy-oriented research on women's health. Through focus groups, women identified health issues that were important to them. Along with focusing on projects that research and promote the empowerment of women, each of the Centres is a partnership between academic and community-based groups, thus directly promoting the effectiveness of local communities, where many health services are provided. As part of the Program, the non-governmental Canadian Women's Health Network is funded by the federal government to disseminate information on women's health, including new knowledge generated by the Centres, and to foster critical debate.

Women's Health Strategy

On March 8, 1999, the Minister of Health launched Health Canada's *Women's Health Strategy* (the *Strategy*), a framework to guide Health Canada in addressing biases and inequities in the health system. To meet its goal, the *Strategy* is organized around four main objectives:

- to ensure that Health Canada's policies and programs are responsive to sex and gender differences and to women's health needs;
- to increase knowledge and understanding of women's health and women's health needs;
- to support the provision of effective health services to women; and
- to promote good health through preventive measures and the reduction of risk factors that most imperil the health of women.

The *Strategy*, which fulfills a commitment made by the federal government in the *Federal Plan*, operates within the context of the Government of Canada's new population health approach. Population health recognizes that many factors, in addition to the health care system, strongly influence the health of individuals and communities. These factors, called "determinants of health," include income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, physical and social environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, gender and culture. Programs based on a population health approach act on these factors and their interactions to improve the health status of individuals and communities as they move through the life cycle, from childhood and adolescence, through adulthood to later life.

Canadian Institute of Health Research
The 1999 federal budget allocated $65 million to support the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in its first year of operation, 2000-01. The CIHR will lead a pan-Canadian effort to integrate data-gathering and information exchange.

Clinical Drug Trials
Women in Canada had been excluded from clinical research trials of new drugs, medical devices and therapies on the grounds of their inconstant hormonal state (compared to men) and researcher liability in the event of pregnancy with a birth defect. In 1996, following consultations with the medical research community, as well as health advocacy and women's organizations, the government stipulated that manufacturers applying to Health Canada for market approval of drugs had to include women in their clinical trials in at least the same proportion as they are likely to use the drugs.

Breast Cancer
While the incidence of breast cancer has risen steadily over the last decade, mortality rates have declined and are now constant. The lowest breast cancer mortality rates have occurred in the two provinces with the most extensive screening programs and among the highest utilization of mammography.

In 1993, the federal government initiated the Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative (CBCI). In June 1998, the CBCI was renewed with stable, ongoing funding of $7 million per year for research, prevention, early detection, quality screening, support to community groups and networks, access to information, public and professional education, diagnosis, care and treatment, and surveillance and monitoring of breast cancer. A key objective is the continued support and coordination of provincial breast cancer screening activities.

Prenatal Nutrition Program
The Prenatal Nutrition Program provides support for pregnant women most at risk of unhealthy birth outcomes. It provides resources to communities to set up or enhance comprehensive prenatal support, such as food supplementation, nutrition counselling, education, referral and counselling on lifestyle issues, including alcohol abuse, stress and family violence.

Civil Society

Health Canada is committed to increasing the role of civil society in policy and program development. For example, Phase III of the National AIDS Strategy (1998 and ongoing) was planned following extensive consultation with NGOs and members of the public, including women living with HIV/AIDS. The 1999 federal budget provided funding for the creation of the Nurses Using Research and Service Evaluation (NURSE) Fund to support research on nursing, a predominantly female profession. This will ensure that the perspectives of nurses are understood with respect to health reform activities.

The Government of Canada has also provided funding support for activities undertaken by women's and other NGOs aimed at addressing the issue of women's health and well-being. Examples of initiatives funded are as follows:

- In 1996-97, funding was provided to the **Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada** in support of an activity entitled **Health Care Reform and the Team Approach in First Nations**. This activity consisted of a two-day educational program to explore approaches and strategies relevant to community health planning, women's health and partnership building. It also involved site visits to seven Aboriginal communities to discuss community health plans in action. This was followed by the adoption of resolutions and an action plan by members of this organization, as part of its annual general meeting.

- In 1997-98, funding was provided to the ***Réseau québecois d'action pour la santé des femmes*** in support of an initiative to promote the participation of women in the development of policies and programs aimed at better responding to women's health needs.

- Multi-year funding (1998-99/99-00/00-01) is being provided in Alberta to **Multicultural Health Brokers** for an initiative entitled **Advancing Minority Women's Health and Well-Being -- An Intersectoral Program and Policy Development Initiative**. This initiative is aimed at increasing access by marginalized minority women to, and participation in decision-making about culturally appropriate health and social services. Outcomes will include the development of guiding principles, practice standards and policies on the creation of meaningful relationships between immigrant and refugee women and families, and institutions.

- Funding was provided to **Kinap'eskw Consulting Group** through Status of Women Canada's Policy Research Fund for a research project entitled **Health Issues for Aboriginal Women in Urban Centres in the Maritime Provinces**. This project will focus on the economic impact of current government policies, in relation to the health needs of Aboriginal women living in urban centres in the Maritimes. Using talking circles, the researchers will investigate the overall health concerns of urban Aboriginal women, identify gaps in health care policy and establish a data base.

International activities

At the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in Geneva in July 1997, Canadian indigenous health experts hosted a joint Canada/World Health Organization workshop on substance abuse and healing, at which indigenous women played a major role in focusing on their special health concerns. This workshop at the UN was organized with financial and policy support from DFAIT, and supported the designated theme of Health for the 1997 WGIP, as one of the principal themes of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

As part of Canadian preparations for the UN General Assembly Special Session in June 1999 to review the International Conference on Population and Development/Program of Action (ICPD+5), DFAIT provided financial and policy support for a separate consultative seminar on indigenous women's reproductive health. The seminar was organized as an interdepartmental effort, involving DFAIT, Health Canada and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, among other federal departments, in collaboration with an NGO, and other front-line providers of health services on- and off-reserve.

CIDA has made women's health and reproductive health a top priority. In Bangladesh, Canada has supported the capacity-building of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to improve reproductive health and family planning service delivery. In Africa, Canada continues to support NGOs working to raise awareness of the harmful hazards of such customs as female genital mutilation, and to increase awareness among both men and women of the importance of AIDS prevention.

The Canada-United States Forum on Women's Health in 1996 brought together 300 individuals working in the area of women's health, and was preceded by focus groups to identify the issues of most concern to women. Thirteen workshops, each addressing key topics on women's health, made recommendations on new policies and programs. A Program of Cooperation between the two countries was initiated in four areas of women's health: breast cancer; smoking cessation; research; and information exchanges/networking.

Canada recently participated in a Commonwealth workshop in St. Kitts and Nevis organized to develop national action plans for instituting a Gender Management System (GMS) for the health sector in each participating country. Canada presented a report of its gender mainstreaming initiatives in the health sector and developed a draft action plan for implementing a GMS in Canada.

Overall Obstacles/Lessons Learned on Women and Health:
The collection of data relating to women's health is improving in Canada. The first National Population Health Survey took place in 1994 and provides biennial, longitudinal sex-disaggregated data on Canadians' health. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of data relating to women's health, especially on the links between health status, and social and economic determinants. There is also currently no systematic evaluation of the health status of the population, although the government has committed to a process of reporting on the health of Canadians. There is a need to develop gender-sensitive health indicators in order to determine the impact of health policies and practices.

The implementation of gender-based analysis throughout government health policies and initiatives has proceeded very slowly as a result of three major types of barriers: attitudinal, operational and theoretical. The first barrier is raised by policy-makers who do not see the need for gender analysis, are hostile or dismissive. The second barrier is related to issues of time, resources, shortage of data and lack of expertise. The third barrier arises when decision-makers have the will to do gender-based analysis, but lack the requisite skill. (Skinner, Erin, October 1998. Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, Lessons from the Field: Policy Makers on Gender-based Analysis Tools in Canada (unpublished)

Commitments to Further Action/New Initiatives

- Continued implementation and ongoing renewal of the Women's Health Strategy will ensure that it remains current and addresses emerging issues. The Women's Health Strategy is a comprehensive, long-term undertaking.

- Continued development of tools, methods and training materials will assist in integrating gender perspectives across Health Canada and in orienting senior managers to the requirements of gender-based analysis.

- Joint initiatives with the USA on the following priority areas identified in the Canada-USA Program of Cooperation will be pursued: smoking cessation; breast cancer; research; and clearinghouses/information networks.

4. Violence Against Women

Violence against women and children continues to be a persistent problem in Canada. The 1993 Statistics Canada *Violence Against Women Survey* found that 51% of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 years. One-third of all Canadian women who have ever been married or lived in a common-law relationship have experienced violence at the hands of a current or past marital partner. According to a homicide survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 1996, married women are seven times more likely to be killed by a spouse than by a stranger. In 1996, nine in ten spousal homicides involved female victims, in cases where there had been a history of spousal violence known to police.

Vulnerability to violence differs, depending on communities and age groups of women. These include Aboriginal women, immigrant women, visible minority women, refugee women, women with disabilities, live-in-domestic workers, women from linguistic minorities, senior women and young women. In fact, the *Violence Against Women Survey* found that the rate of victimization of young women in the months prior to the study was almost three times higher among 18 to 24 year olds (27%), than for women in general (10%).

The Government of Canada remains committed to addressing violence against women on every front. This violence is systemic and pervasive, and the responses must be as encompassing as possible. The government is therefore pursuing a multifaceted, multidisciplinary approach that builds on a wide range of partnerships with the provinces and territories, women's groups, NGOs and other sectors of society.

Initiatives are underway in terms of criminal justice reform; training and education; research and data collection; public awareness and education; safe housing; and support to victims.

Legislation

The *Federal Plan for Gender Equality* includes as one of its eight objectives to reduce violence in society, particularly violence against women and children. Since 1995, the Government has passed several key pieces of legislation that strengthen the criminal justice system's capacity to address violence against women and children:

- restrictions to the ownership and use of firearms;
- limits to the defence of extreme self-induced intoxication;
- more effective peace bonds;
- creation of the Witness Protection Program to protect witnesses whose lives are in danger;
- provisions for longer sentences for crimes considered to be motivated by hate based on sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other characteristics;
- strengthening the sentencing and correctional regime for high-risk offenders, especially those previously convicted of sex offenses and other violent offenses;
- measures to allow the prosecution of Canadians who travel abroad and sexually exploit juvenile prostitutes, and those who kill their victims while engaged in criminal harassment;
- prohibiting the practice of female genital mutilation;
- restrictions on the eligibility for parole of certain inmates serving life sentences; and

- restrictions on the production of confidential records of witnesses for the defence and complainants in sexual assault proceedings.

Family Violence

In 1997, the federal government's commitment to reduce family violence in Canada, and in particular, violence against women and children, was re-affirmed with the launching of the third Family Violence Initiative. This Initiative has no pre-set completion date, although it is to be reviewed after five years. The objectives of this current Initiative are to promote public awareness of the risk factors of family violence and the need for public involvement in responding to the problem; to strengthen the ability of the criminal justice and housing systems to respond to the problem; and to support data collection, research and evaluation efforts to identify effective interventions. The 11 federal departments that participate in this strategy are responsible for issues related to health, social policy, housing, culture, Aboriginal peoples, justice, law enforcement and corrections, gender equality, immigration, as well as national data collection and dissemination.

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is currently implementing a national system to increase its effectiveness in assessing offenders at risk for family violence at intake. This is intended to ensure that family violence treatment issues are addressed in the offender's Correctional Plan at the most appropriate time possible. Policy and guidelines were created to prevent incidents of family violence in the inmates visiting program and to ensure that incidents that occur during general or private family visits are addressed. This includes: ensuring that offenders at risk are provided with opportunities to attend treatment programs and reassessing their risk prior to granting private family visits, and obtaining the visitor's assessment of their safety during a private family visit. CSC provides over 70 intervention programs of varying levels of intensity to offenders at both community and institutional sites. Community programs are expected to provide programs for women partners to enhance partner safety.

The Girl Child

(see also initiatives under sexual exploitation, page 29 and the girl child section, page 67)

In 1997-98, Status of Women Canada provided funding to the **Alliance of Five Research Centers on Violence** in support of the first phase of work to examine the issue of violence prevention and the girl child. The Alliance has now completed an extensive literature review mapping out the findings of existing research dealing with issues related to violence and the girl child. It has also compiled an inventory of programs and services available to girls in each of the five regions of Canada, and conducted focus groups involving service providers and girls in each region. With continuing funding support, the Alliance is pursuing its work, which could serve as the basis for the development of any action-oriented strategy for the girl child.

Sexual Exploitation

Through the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada (SWC) provided financial support for the initiative **Stolen Innocence - A National Campaign Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**. Phase one of this British Columbia pilot project, aimed to increase public awareness of child sex tourism and of Bill C-27, which permits the prosecution in Canada of Canadians who engage in prostitution-related activities with children abroad; to educate the Canadian travel and tourism industry about the issues of child sex tourism and the role they can play in a prevention strategy; and to facilitate increased sharing of information and other resources among those involved in addressing the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children both in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Participation in the initiative included representatives from governments, the Canadian travel and tourism industry, and non-governmental organizations. **Stolen Innocence** constitutes one of the major follow-up actions by Canada to the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, convened in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996.

Given the globalization of the very complex issues of sexual exploitation of children, the lessons learned from the pilot phase of the national campaign will likely inform the efforts of other campaigns at the national and international levels.

Through the Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Justice and SWC's Women's Program, funding was provided for **Out of the Shadows and Into the Light: A Project to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Boys in Canada**. This project, led by Save the Children Canada, sought to advance the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children through a preventative strategy and a resolution strategy. The preventative strategy involved the participation of boys and girls who are in the sex trade to develop outreach programs designed to prevent other children from entering the trade. The resolution strategy involved encouraging children in the sex trade to exit by identifying resources and alternatives based on their identified needs, and designed for use by communities across Canada.

Crime Prevention

The **National Strategy for Community Safety and Crime Prevention** is designed to encourage key governmental and non-governmental partners to reduce crime and victimization, and to assist communities in developing and implementing their own solutions to problems that contribute to crime and victimization, particularly violence against youth, women and Aboriginal people. Its aim is also to increase public awareness, and support effective approaches to crime prevention.

Phase II of the Strategy, announced in 1998, enables the federal government to broaden its partnerships, and support communities in designing and implementing innovative and sustainable ways of preventing crime.

First Nations Senior Investigators/Family Violence Course

The First Nations Family Violence Course was developed by the Canadian Police College, in collaboration with the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, with funding provided by the Aboriginal Policing Directorate within the Department of Solicitor General of Canada. The course has been offered on five occasions: May 1994, March 1995, 1996 and 1997 and January 1998. Based on its success, it is planned to be offered again. The purpose of the course is to provide First Nations police officers with the skill and expertise to deal with the pervasive problem of family violence on-reserve. The three-week course offers training in investigative techniques, including confronting the perpetrator, supporting the victims of family violence and attempting to guide both the victim and aggressor toward the proper community/justice resources.

Having First Nations police officers trained in the area of family violence investigative techniques can only serve to help women living on-reserve feel more comfortable with reporting the crime to the police, something which has been deficient in the past. As well, police officers can help explain in detail what steps will take place in the justice system after the crime is reported.

Violence and the Media

Canada is seen as a world leader in its action to address the issue of violence on television and in the electronic media, particularly with respect to its effects on children. In 1993, the federal government announced its **Media Violence Strategy**. The Strategy consisted of a five-year work plan (1995-1999) to reduce media violence, to use the media as a positive force to encourage attitudinal and behavioural change towards societal violence, and to promote media education for children, parents and viewers.

The Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage has a special funding allocation for public education about family violence that is targeted to ethnic and visible minority communities, especially those who are not fluent in English or French. Through the Family Violence Prevention Initiative, a **Public Education Campaign on Ethnic Media** was undertaken because approximately 16% of Canadians were born in another country, many of whom have a first language other than English or French.

Using a community-development approach, the Multiculturalism Program is working with non-governmental organizations and ethnic media to provide information, in languages other than English or French, about Canadian laws and the very real consequences for families of wife, child and elder abuse. This social marketing campaign includes information programs on ethnic radio and television stations, public announcements on ethnic television stations, and a special issue about family violence for ethnic print media.

In partnership with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, the Canadian Cable Television Association, Media Awareness Network, and Concerned Children's Advertisers, the Department of Canadian Heritage has commissioned research, held industry seminars on

television violence, supported the development of a television classification system, promoted media literacy, and encouraged the production of quality children's programming.

Examples of Obstacles/Lessons Learned

- Family violence affects minority, as well as majority, groups in Canada;
- linguistic and cultural barriers prevent information from reaching some members of minority communities;
- one important key to prevention is the provision of information about the practical consequences of violence against women and children, e.g., intervention by outside authorities and family break-ups; and
- information campaigns are most effective when they are: a) delivered in the first languages of target communities; b) targeted to entire communities, including but not limited to women; c) delivered by people who are known to and trusted by target communities, e.g., doctors, religious leaders, and community workers from the same ethnic group; and d) include information about where people can go for help.

Violence in the Workplace

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has developed two series of fact sheets which cover the themes of violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. HRDC is also developing model policies on workplace harassment for federally regulated employers.

Federal-Provincial/Territorial Initiatives

Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women have taken a collective leadership role on violence against women. At their 1996 meeting, the Ministers released **"Beyond Violence: Reaching for Higher Ground,"** a resource guide which catalogues violence prevention and intervention initiatives across the country. The aim of the publication is to help governments and community organizations share information on best practices and avoid unwarranted duplication.

In 1998, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women made a Declaration of Violence Prevention (the *Iqaluit Declaration)*. The Declaration outlines common goals and principles shared across jurisdictions in Canada, and a common commitment to address and prevent violence against women.

The Department of Justice Canada hosted a **Federal-Provincial/Territorial Forum on Spousal Abuse Cases** in March 1998, to discuss and exchange best practices by police, Crown prosecutors, victims' services and policy experts relating to spousal abuse cases.

Research

Through Statistics Canada, the federal government conducts a bi-annual survey of **Transition Homes** that goes to the almost 500 shelters across the country to determine services provided, the number of admissions during the year, including the number of women and children, and a profile of the women in shelters on a specific date. The profile includes the type of abuse reported by the women and their children, some personal characteristics such as age, whether they reported to police, as well as revenue and expenditure data on shelters.

In addition, Statistics Canada produces an annual publication on **Family Violence** in Canada, which analyses available data on spousal violence, child abuse and the abuse of seniors. Statistics Canada also produced an analysis of sexual offenders in May 1999.

Further, Statistics Canada is currently undertaking a **survey of victimization** which will measure personal and property crimes against males and females 15 years of age and older, including physical and sexual assaults. This survey includes questions on spousal violence and senior abuse.

The Government of Canada is currently conducting the first national research initiative on violence against live-in caregivers, including a national consultation, literature review and community data gathering.

Tools and Training

The Government of Canada, in concert with provincial Departments of Justice, is preparing **"Guidelines Relating to Criminal Harassment"** for police and Crown prosecutors. These guidelines are designed to improve the criminal justice system's response to this form of violence (stalking), particularly family violence against women. A Department of Justice research study conducted in 1996 indicated that 57% of criminal harassment cases involved domestic (or former) partners, of which 95% involved a male accused and a female victim.

Federal departments responsible for issues related to the administration of justice have developed a variety of training and skills development tools that address violence against women issues. One such tool is an **Investigative Guide for Sexual Offenses**, developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for its officers, to provide information on appropriate sexual assault investigations. The RCMP also supports community-based workshops on victims' issues, sexual assault and violence in relationships, and assists communities in using problem-solving approaches to family violence issues.

Sport Canada has also provided funding to the **Collective on Harassment and Abuse in Sport**, in support of its initiatives over the past two years. "Speak Out...Act Now", is a publication developed for use in the sport community. Work is also being undertaken in the areas of homophobia and racism.

Civil Society

In May 1998, Status of Women Canada (SWC) announced financial assistance to the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence to develop a national strategy on family violence prevention and the girl-child. Other examples of financial assistance include:

The **Calgary Coalition Against Family Violence**, with funding from SWC, worked extensively with women's shelters and transition houses to ensure that the needs of immigrant and visible minority women were met. The project resulted in changes to policies and

procedures by agencies throughout the shelter movement, involving such areas as staffing, staff training, diet, child care and cultural interpreters.

Equay Wuk Women's Group was established in 1988 to represent the interests of Aboriginal women in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation of Northern Ontario. Participants include women from 25 isolated First Nations communities. SWC has been a key partner in supporting Equay Wuk to develop and carry out a three-year anti-violence strategy in northern communities. Anti-violence training manuals were developed based on input from women in First Nations Communities. The guides, in English and Oji Cree, have been used extensively in training health and social service workers. In addition, local women were trained to provide workshops and support to women in their communities.

Funding is being provided to the **Vancouver Custody and Access Support and Advocacy Association** over three years through to 2000/2001, in support of an activity entitled **Custody and Access Systemic Change Project**. This activity will serve to develop a long-term set of strategies to communicate to key policy and decision-makers about how custody and access policies, procedures, programs and practices impact women and their children, and how they could be improved to better reflect women's equality issues and safety concerns. As well, policy information and analysis will be provided to front-line workers and women's equality advocates to collectively address current trends in gender-neutral family laws, the minimization and denial of the issue of women and child abuse, women's decreased access to the justice system, and regressive changes to custody and access laws.

With 1998/99 funding, the **Coalition for Women Abuse Policy and Protocol** in Prince Edward Island is developing a partnership framework with key players from various interdisciplinary fields to identify gaps in current policies and protocols as they relate to women abuse in PEI. They aim to ensure a better-coordinated response from service providers within government departments and agencies to woman victims of family violence.

In 1997-98, the ***Comité d'aide aux femmes sourdes de Québec*** received funding to produce and distribute a video-cassette in sign language, and prepare a facilitators guide and workshops for the deaf to cultivate a better understanding of the cycle of violence among the members of this community. The organization was awarded a prize by the ***Institut de réadaptation en déficience physique du Québec***, in recognition of the quality and relevance of its video production entitled ***Problème dans le couple***.

International activities

The Government of Canada works actively at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the UN General Assembly (GA) to support resolutions calling for the elimination of violence against women including the girl child; the recognition of violence against women as a violation of the human rights of women; and the elimination of traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, including female genital mutilation.

As a result of a Canadian-led resolution at the CHR in 1994, a Special Rapporteur on violence against women was appointed to collect information on violence against women, to recommend measures to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences. The Special Rapporteur is currently in her second term, and support for this Canadian-led CHR initiative is increasing with over 70 co-sponsors from all regional groups.

Through its partner Match International, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is working to eliminate violence against women by supporting safe havens for abused women, legal aid and training in legal rights and in income-generating activities in Peru.

Subsequent to the Crime Congress initiatives and recent developments in the **UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)** at its 6th session in 1997, Canada successfully introduced a resolution concerning crime prevention and criminal justice measures to eliminate violence against women which provides a detailed complement to the Beijing ***Platform for Action***.

5. Women and Armed Conflict

Gender is a factor in peacebuilding activities since women and men experience conflict differently and have differential access to resources, including power and decision-making during conflicts. Women, as well as men, have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities. Their contributions to peacebuilding need to be encouraged and supported, while recognizing that women's economic and political marginalization means that they are not always well-placed to play an effective role.

Canada continues to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) programming and policy. Canada was a strong proponent of the establishment within UNHCR of a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women in 1989, and agreed to staff and fund the position for two years. The Senior Coordinator drafted the UNHCR guidelines on Refugee Women and the position has now become a permanent UNHCR post, attached to the Program Policy Unit. This position is regarded as an important means of mainstreaming a gender perspective and Canada continues to strongly support the work of the UNHCR in this regard. Furthermore, Canada has been and continues to be active within UNHCR Executive Committee discussions on conclusions related to women refugees and gender persecution. Canada continues to promote UNHCR reporting on steps taken to mainstream gender concerns in their activities, including UNHCR efforts to implement the Beijing PFA.

Canada played a leadership role in the creation of an independent and effective International Criminal Court (ICC). Canada was also instrumental in the achievement of a gender-sensitive Statute, including securing the provision that the applicable sources of law must be applied without adverse distinctions based on grounds such as gender. Canada continues to promote the integration of a gender perspective in the Elements of Crimes and the Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

Canada advocated for the successful inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence within the definition of crimes, provisions ensuring protection of victims and witnesses, and the assurance of relevant expertise in the composition and administration of the ICC. Canada was also instrumental in securing references that States should strive to elect judges who possess expertise in violence against women, and that the Prosecutor take measures to ensure the effective investigation of sexual violence and violence against children.

Canada strongly supported the appointment of advisors on gender-based violence to the ICC, and the establishment of a Victims and Witnesses Unit for the protection, security and counseling of victims and witnesses, which will include staff experienced in trauma related to crimes of sexual violence.

Canada appointed an NGO advisor with expertise in gender issues to the Canadian delegation to the Rome Conference, and worked in close collaboration with NGOs interested in ensuring gender-sensitive outcomes.

Canada has consistently raised issues associated with the impact of conflict on women within UN Security Council (UNSC) thematic and geographic discussions. For example, Canada stressed the importance of ensuring that strategies to manage peace support operations or the rebuilding of local security institutions take into account a gender perspective, as well as the need to better address the protection and assistance requirements of war-affected women, including displaced and refugee women.

In an effort to enhance Canadian policy development and as part of the follow-up to Canada's UNSC February 1999 Presidency theme "the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," the Government of Canada has organized two policy roundtables in Geneva and New York in April and May 1999 on selected issues related to this theme. A gender perspective has been mainstreamed throughout the agendas of both roundtables, which address questions related to UN mandated missions, war-affected children, fundamental standards of humanity and gender dimensions of protection.

Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative

Under the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative, established in 1996, Canada is currently developing a strategic framework and action plan to identify issues central to gender and peacebuilding, and to define appropriate tracks for policy research and implementation. Consistent with this approach, Canada has begun to examine with NGOs, the UN and other governments on how conflict, conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes can affect and engage women and men differently. How to support and strengthen the contribution women and men can and do make to peacebuilding is also being examined.

Gender and Peacebuilding

DFAIT recently launched a new research and policy development initiative on gender and peacebuilding. This initiative focuses on the gender-differentiated experiences, accounts, impacts and perspectives of armed conflict. The policy work seeks to address, from a gender perspective, the broad issues of peace implementation, human security and the cessation of violence. The objective is to integrate a gender perspective into DFAIT's peacebuilding policy development and peace implementation programming.

DFAIT is co-developing the Joint Canada-UK Gender Awareness Training Initiative for Civilian and Military Participants in Peace Operations. The training curriculum aims to enhance awareness of the gender dimensions of peace operations, and provide participants with the ability to employ gender analysis when in the field. This will be achieved through the provision of concrete skills and tools. The pilot is expected to be delivered in December 1999.

Canada continues to develop "gender and peacebuilding" as one of its core human security issues under the Canada-Norway Lysoen partnership. This partnership will provide opportunities for policy research and development, and the implementation of specific initiatives in gender and peacebuilding. The Lysoen partnership also aims to integrate a gender perspective into other identified action areas, including small arms, and children and armed conflict.

Women At Risk

In 1998, in response to a request from the UNHCR, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) hosted an international workshop of government officials, NGOs and Women at Risk program participants to examine challenges facing both governments and NGOs in the delivery of programs designed to protect refugee women. That workshop was followed by a national workshop on Canada's Women at Risk program. One of the outcomes of these workshops is an Urgent Protection Pilot, to be implemented in 1999. The pilot will be tested on women-at-risk cases in need of urgent protection. These cases will be selected within 24 hours and resettled in Canada within 48 to 72 hours.

Anti-Personnel Mines

Canada has taken an active, leadership role in supporting the international campaign to bring about a ban on anti-personnel mines. The treaty signing ceremony for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was held in Ottawa on December 3, 1997 and Canada was the first country to ratify the Convention. Canada ceased production of anti-personnel (AP) mines in 1987 and destroyed the last remaining stockpile on November 3, 1997.

Canadian mine action programming endeavours to ensure that no barriers exist for the participation of women or girls in mine awareness education; and that there is no gender discrimination in the provision of trauma care, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for AP mine victims. Evidence from mine-affected states indicates that women and girl survivors of AP mine incidents are often financially and socially marginalized. In its victim assistance and rehabilitation programmes, Canada endeavours to ensure that women and girls have the tools to provide for themselves and their families.

In its mine action programming, Canada ensures the opportunity for women to participate in the programming and decision-making of organizations and initiatives that address demining, mine awareness and victim assistance. All programmes in these areas are designed to take full advantage of women's contributions as community leaders, caregivers, and educators/trainers.

Immigration Review Board (IRB) Gender Guidelines

The 1993 IRB Guidelines on Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution were updated in 1996 to clarify and strengthen the principle that adjudicating gender-persecution requires making the links between a women's gender, the feared persecution and one or more of the enumerated grounds for persecution. The Guidelines now take into account Supreme Court decisions confirming that gender is the basis for entitlement to protection as a "member of a particular social group," which is one of the grounds for recognition of Convention refugee status. As well, the amended Guidelines clarify that sexual violence in the context of civil war must be recognized as gender persecution.

Through the Sri Lanka Gender and Development Fund, the Canadian International Development Agency has supported projects to increase the capacity of women whose lives

have been devastated by civil and ethnic conflict, and to re-establish social and economic stability for their families and communities.

This initiative involved assisting grassroots organizations to implement projects focused on empowerment and economic security for women affected by conflict (in particular widows and displaced women), as well as supporting efforts to promote ethnic harmony.

6. Women and the Economy

Promoting women's economic autonomy is fundamental to achieving women's equality in society. It is also fundamental to the long-term social well-being and economic prosperity of the nation.

On the surface, progress towards equality in the paid workforce is occurring in Canada. Women now represent almost half of all paid workers, up from 37% in 1976. Women are now the major earners in 25% of families and women-led businesses are now creating more jobs in Canada than the largest 100 companies combined. On average, between 1986 and 1995, gender gaps in earnings and income narrowed, and total after-tax income for women rose from 52% of men's after-tax income to 60% (Source: Status of Women Canada, *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*). In particular, well-educated women with few family responsibilities are closing the gap with men in similar circumstances.

Despite the advances women have made, many challenges remain. Women continue to experience a wage gap. In 1996, the full-year earnings of women were 73% that of men. As well, women still remain clustered in the traditionally "female-dominated" occupations of teaching, nursing and health-related occupations, clerical positions, or sales and services, all of which tend to pay less than male-dominated occupations. A growing number of women also work part-time because they cannot find full-time work (34% of all female part-time workers in 1994 up from 22% in 1989). Women have more difficulty than men moving out of low-income jobs over time, a problem most severe among lone parents. Women who face additional barriers based on factors such as race, age, Aboriginal status, sexual orientation and disability, have work and income patterns that do not compare favourably to the average.

As women enter the paid labour market, they also experience the economic consequences of their roles as child bearers and primary caregivers, and the conflicting demands of their unpaid and paid work responsibilities. In Canada, approximately two-thirds of unpaid work is performed by women. Despite the massive influx of women into the paid labour market in Canada, their share of unpaid work has declined only marginally since 1961. Mothers with full-time employment - with a spouse and a young child, for example -- had a larger share of both paid and child-oriented unpaid work in 1992 than in 1986. For many women, this has created a significant "time crunch" as they attempt to balance their paid and unpaid work responsibilities.

The Government of Canada has adopted a broad approach towards this complex issue. In general, government action has focused on enhancing women's opportunities in the paid labour force, on understanding the links between paid and unpaid work, and on securing the future stability of Canada's social programs. While advances have been made in a number of areas of women's economic autonomy, further progress is needed in other key areas.

Employment Equity

Canada's new *Employment Equity Act* was passed in 1995 and came into force in October 1996. It fulfilled the Government's commitments to strengthen the old legislation by increasing its scope to include the federal public service and by expanding the mandate of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to enforce the *Act*.

Women represented 44.83% of the workforce under the Act in 1996. Since 1987, their representation has grown at a higher pace (3.89 percentage points). Between 1995 and 1996, more men than women left the workforce. Accordingly, women's representation continued to increase.

The Federal Contractors Program requires companies doing business with the federal government to achieve and maintain a representative workforce through the implementation of Employment Equity Plans. In keeping with the Government's commitments, the requirements of the Federal Contractors Program must be equivalent to the requirements under the new *Employment Equity Act*.

Child Care

The Government of Canada's activities with respect to child care include research and funding.

One such activity was a comprehensive study of human resource issues in child care. This in-depth sector study, entitled *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, examines the child care workforce, its wages, benefit levels, working conditions, training and career opportunities in a full range of settings such as child care centres and nursery schools, as well as home-based care. This study was funded through the Sectoral Partnerships Initiative, which is designed to bring together partners in a sector to analyse human resource issues and to develop a plan of action. A committee is now examining ways to act upon the sector study recommendations.

Child Care Visions (CCV) was created in 1995 as a national child care research and development contributions initiative to support projects that will study the adequacy, outcomes and cost-effectiveness of best child care practices and service delivery models that currently exist.

Funds have been invested to create 4,800 new child care spaces, and enhance a further 2,900 spaces, on First Nations reserves and in Inuit communities. This programming is designed and delivered by First Nations and Inuit Child Care Centres at the local level, with good results.

Unpaid Work

A number of developments have been undertaken in recognizing unpaid as well as paid work in public policy analysis and development.

- Some examples of specific policy measures are provided in the section on Poverty, such as the new caregiver tax credit and provisions of the public pension system that take women's years of caring for young children into account. Employment Insurance benefits described below also have features that recognize dependent care work.
- Unpaid work is a key element of the **Economic Gender Equality Indicators**, other data development efforts as well as gender-based analysis guides and tools that have been developed to promote mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas of policy.
- Unpaid work has been identified as a specific priority for SWC's Policy Research Fund (PRF). A notable recent contribution under this theme is a study by Dr. Isa Bakker entitled **Unpaid Work and Macro Economics: New Discussions and New Tools for Action**. A considerable amount of other PRF research addresses unpaid work issues in examining child care, elder care and public service delivery issues. An example is **Benefiting Canada's Children: Perspectives on Gender and Social Responsibility**, by Christa Freiler and Judy Cerny.
- Research in other departments exploring the dynamics of unpaid work in our society, its contributions and its relevance to the development of labour market policy is also being undertaken, including a Work Arrangements Survey to explore the extent and use of various alternative work arrangements.
- Funding has been provided to a number of women's non-governmental organizations to study and promote awareness of the policy implications of unpaid work. One important product has been the development of **When Women Count: A Resource Manual on Unpaid Work**.
- A House of Commons committee was struck to examine issues related to the treatment of families with dependent children in the tax and transfer system. It heard witnesses from across the country and has reported a number of recommendations to be considered by the Finance Committee and the Government that could provide enhanced assistance for families to meet their income and care requirements.

Work and Family

The composition of the labour force in Canada is changing with an increasing proportion of women, including mothers of young children. The nature of employment is also changing, with increases in the types and prevalence of non-standard work, including increases in involuntary part-time and contingent work. The impact of non-standard employment on job and income security, and the consequent impacts on family formation and stability is of concern.

In June 1997, the Minister of Labour released *Collective Reflection*, a report by the Advisory Committee on the Changing Workplace. The committee was established to examine the issues of the changing nature of work and the workplace, considering the emerging needs of, and impact on workers and employers. The report includes a consideration of how workplace change might better recognize the needs of children, youth, adults and senior citizens.

One of the key goals of the National Child Benefit (NCB) is to reduce barriers to employment and enable families to better meet their care and income needs. NCB-related programs, such as increased income support benefits and improved childcare subsidies, facilitate the participation of mothers in the paid labour force. See the section on Women and Poverty for more information on the National Child Benefit System.

Through the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED), the federal government recognizes that families incurring childcare expenses have a reduced ability to pay taxes. The CCED reduces the employment-related costs for the lower-income spouse -- usually the mother -- to join the paid workforce.

Evaluation and Data Development
Work has begun on an evaluation study to determine what has and has not worked with respect to gender equality, in the area of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)'s labour market and social policy initiatives.

Aboriginal Strategic Initiatives
Funding of these initiatives is linked to a broad range of Aboriginal issues such as labour market-oriented programs, social services and education. There is recognition of the need to be responsive to Aboriginal peoples' cultural, economic, social and linguistic diversity, particularly those with greater barriers to employment and full participation in the work force, such as women, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. Sample projects that support Aboriginal women's equality include **The Untapped Resource**, a project with the Native Women's Association that is developing partnerships with the corporate sector to access and sustain employment opportunities for Aboriginal women.

Status of Women Canada is also providing financial support through its Policy Research Fund for a research project entitled **Policy, Work and Employability Among Native Women** (*Partenariat INRS -- Culture et société/Association des femmes autochtones du Québec*). This research project will explore how Native women, who are beginning to join the Canadian labour market, face a number of obstacles, such as a limited job market, a lack of information about available employment, few role models, and insufficient training on how to get a job or open a business. This research project seeks to identify and assess the nature, use and efficiency of employment policies and access to employment for the Native women population in the province of Quebec. The results of this research will allow the proposal of alternate solutions, to give Native women the tools they need for accessing a similar job market to that of other women in Canada.

The Road to Independence: A Human Resource Development Approach to the Inuit Clothing Industry -- this project with Pauktuutit equips Inuit women with the skills and knowledge required to produce hand-crafted traditional and contemporary Inuit garments as one component of a sustainable community economic development strategy.

Establishment of Native Training Centres in Urban Areas -- this project with the Quebec Association of Friendship Centres is developing and implementing distance learning programs for urban Aboriginal people, as an alternative to mainstream education. Most participants are women. The Native Training Centres offer academic upgrading at secondary and post-secondary levels, support students in their development and facilitate their transition to the labour market.

Employment Insurance Parts I and II
The Canadian employment insurance system provides benefits which are temporary income supports to workers who become involuntarily unemployed. Special benefits such as maternity, parental and sickness support are provided, as well as measures to assist unemployed Canadians to re-enter the paid workforce.

The reforms of the Employment Insurance system introduced in July 1996 and January 1997 were the most fundamental restructuring of the unemployment insurance program in 25 years. In conducting a gender-based analysis of the EI reform, it was recognized that any reform measures would have a differential impact on women and men because of their different social, economic and familial realities. Women earn less than men on average, are over-represented in the contingency work force such as part-time employment, multiple jobs and low-paying jobs. They comprise the majority of lone-parent families, and carry the main share of family responsibilities and unpaid work.

These reforms included providing means to assist women in overcoming barriers to employment through targeted employment benefits, childcare and income supports. The broader eligibility requirements for benefits will enable women who find it difficult to re-enter the workforce, (for example, those who left the paid labour force for maternity leave and/or parental leave), to access assistance.

The Government made a commitment to monitor and assess the impact of the reform for five years. The second report was released in early 1999, and demonstrated that the number of women who successfully claim benefits decreased by 20%, compared to a decrease of 16% for men. With respect to maternity and parental benefits, while 98% of applicants have the necessary hours, some women fall short of the required hours for these benefits, especially between children. Human Resources Development Canada is reviewing information to better determine the causes of these outcomes.

Employment Insurance Benefits
Under the new, hours-based system, part-time workers and multiple jobholders have their work insured for the first time. It is estimated that women make up the majority of part-time workers and nearly half of all multiple job holders. It is estimated that these reforms resulted in 270,000 women being covered by EI for the first time.

Due to the hours-based system, more women working part-time are now eligible for both EI and maternity benefits.

By serving as replacement income, maternity and parental benefits provided under the *Employment Insurance Act* enable women and men to take temporary leave from work during the period immediately surrounding the birth of a child, and during the early months after birth or adoption. The benefits system provides 15 weeks of maternity benefits to biological mothers during the period surrounding childbirth, and 10 weeks of parental benefits to both adoptive and biological parents for child care purposes. Parental benefits are payable to either parent or can be shared between them with an extra five weeks of benefits, should the child require special care.

About two-thirds of new claimants receiving the Family Income Supplement (FIS) are women (about 67%). The FIS is intended to target claimants in need; it is a family supplement for claimants in low-income families with dependent children based on net family income. To qualify for this top-up, claimants must receive the Child Tax Benefit, which indicates that they have at least one dependent child and have a net family income of $25,921 or less.

Employment Benefit and Support Measures

The Government of Canada undertakes a number of measures to assist in the integration of workers into the labour market. Special provisions assist women to be eligible for these employment measures – specifically, women who are re-entering the labour force, and who have collected maternity or parental benefits in the last five years. Support for child care is also available to individuals participating in employment benefits, as well as during the subsequent period of job searching and initial job placement.

The employment benefit and support measures include the following:

- subsidies to encourage employers to hire new workers;
- loans and grants to help unemployed workers develop new job skills and training;
- self-employment training to help individuals to create jobs for themselves by starting a business; and
- Employment Assistance Services, to provide employment counselling, job search and case-management services to women.

Labour Market Training

Starting in 1996, the federal government entered into new partnerships with individual provinces and territorial governments for labour market training activities. These agreements include the requirement in principle that equity groups (groups identified under the *Employment Equity Act)* are considered with respect to the new client service arrangements. This means that the provinces now provide the majority of labour market training. (See also initiatives under Education and Training).

Workplace Policies

Each year, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) receives and investigates a large number of cases of discrimination on the basis of sex, the vast majority of which concern women. In fact, such complaints typically make up 20% of the Commission's workload. In the years following the adoption of the *Platform for Action*, the CHRC received the following number of complaints on the ground of sex: 405 in 1996; 250 in 1997; and 319 in 1998. In roughly half of these cases, harassment is alleged. To help in dealing with this issue, the Commission developed model harassment policies in 1998 and has made them available to employers across the country.

Since the *Platform for Action* was implemented, a CHRC tribunal ruled that with respect to a number of predominantly female occupations, the federal government's pay practices were discriminatory. The current law on pay equity requires clarification and there is a strong divergence of opinions on how to achieve the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The fact that this case has been open since the early 1980s indicates that the Commission's legislative authority in this area is insufficient. For this reason, the Commission welcomed the Government's interest in exploring the equal-pay provisions of the *Employment Equity Act*.

Research

Economic Gender Equality Indicators, released in 1997, are a new tool for measuring women's economic status and progress. This set of benchmarks – a joint federal-provincial/territorial initiative – transcends traditional measures and reflects factors such as unpaid work, education and job-related training. In March 1998, the Government sponsored an **international symposium on Gender Equality Indicators** as a way to stimulate public policy discussion on indicators and contribute to international work in this area. These indicators will be updated in 1999.

Lessons learned from the gender equality indicators project:

- Finding the best data sources is key to the development of gender equality indicators. Finding ways of including information about all parts of Canada can be challenging. Another lesson learned is that progress is being made in developing indicators with significant potential to improve gender analysis capacity and policy effectiveness. Much more needs to be done, however, especially in the area of analysis. Recognizing diversity among women is essential to this analysis. Using a male standard alone can be problematic when comparing women and men who may possess more similarities than women of diverse background and experience.

On June 15, 1998, SWC hosted a workshop on **Women and the Knowledge-Based Economy and Society (KBES)**, in partnership with the federal government's Policy Research Secretariat. Over 50 people attended, including members of the Policy Research Initiative's networks, strategic policy units of key federal departments (including women's bureaux) and academics.

The workshop had two main objectives: to identify and discuss the potential impact of the KBES on women; and to establish horizontal linkages on gender issues between relevant federal government departments - in particular, those involved in the KBES pilot project - with a view to shaping directions for further policy research and development in this area.

Recently, Statistics Canada completed a **survey on formal and informal volunteer activity** in Canada. The 1996 Census also included **questions on domestic work and care-giving**.

Civil Society

The Government of Canada provides financial support for projects undertaken by women's and other equality seeking organizations aimed at addressing the issue of women's economic equality. The following are some examples of these projects:

- the **Manitoba Farm Women's Conference** for an annual provincial farm women's conference and follow-up evaluation;
- the **New Brunswick Women's Intercultural Network** for an activity entitled *Steps Towards Economic Self-Sufficiency*, which identified and addressed the various systemic barriers to economic participation faced by immigrant and visible-minority women in New Brunswick; and
- the **Nova Scotia Women's Fishnet** to facilitate a community development process aimed at increasing women's ability to participate in all aspects of decision-making concerning the fishery and their local communities.

In 1995-96 and 1996-97, SWC provided two grants that enabled **Kootenay WITT (Women in Trades, Technology, Operations and Blue Collar Work)** to achieve a number of significant outcomes related to women's participation in British Columbia's economic development. These include the following:

- three members of the 18-member Advisory Committee of the Columbia Basin Trust (a regional benefit program to address the environmental damage caused by the 1964 Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the United States) are women's equality advocates - one seat has been specifically reserved for a women's equality representative;
- Equity Integration Committees have been established under the Science Council of British Columbia, the Columbia Basin Trust and the Island Highway Infrastructure Project to address equity issues on an ongoing basis;
- a formalized commitment to employment equity by employers and building trade unions has been included in the contract agreement under the Island Highway project - a commitment that extends to all B.C. highway construction projects of over $50 million. This commitment to employment equity includes the training of designated group members; and
- a formal commitment in the Columbia Basin Trust Management Plan to create equitable outcomes for traditionally disadvantaged groups in all development and construction projects the Trust administers.

In partnership with other local WITT groups and groups representing First Nations peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities, Kootenay WITT accomplished these outcomes by working to secure the representation of women's equality advocates at a number of key negotiations and consultations impacting on trade and technology workers. Once representation was secured, advocates worked to ensure that a gender-based analysis was incorporated into all agreements and practices relating to hiring, training and promotion of trade and technology workers.

International activities

In 1996, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided seed funding for the initiation of a new project on Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa (GERA). The project focuses on increasing the capacity of African research organizations and women's groups to research, analyse and influence economic policies from a gender perspective.

The Government of Canada works actively to support women business owners. In June 1998, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) launched the Businesswomen in Trade web site, which allows women business owners to learn more about government services and how to export successfully. It also allows them to network on-line, learn about financing and insurance services, and locate foreign business opportunities. The site launch reached over 500 Canadian women.

The Trade Research Coalition, under the direction of 20 Canadian businesswomen, academics and government representatives, launched a major research project in September 1998. The research surveyed 254 businesswomen owners, and examined their export patterns and export service requirements. The results, contained in the document *Beyond Borders: Canadian Businesswomen in International Trade*, was launched to 1,500 businesswomen during a national video conference call on International Women's Day, March 8, 1999. The call joined nine sites across Canada, the U.S., Argentina and the U.K. Through this initiative, the federal government identified and added 2,100 new businesswomen contacts to its database, and developed the first quantified documentation in Canada on the export activities and attitudes of this growing market sector.

This research provided the main substance of the policy elements discussed at the Canada-U.S. Trade Summit, taking place May 19-20, 1999 which focused on businesswomen owners. The Summit involved 150 Canadian and 150 American businesswomen within small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); provided an opportunity to discuss trade impediments between the two countries, particularly as experienced by businesswomen, and researched by the Trade Research Coalition; and allowed new deals to be formed though organized networking events. DFAIT was a member of the Advisory Committee for the Summit, and provided the on-line mission platform and the Trade Research Coalition results to guide the trade issues. In conjunction with its partners, DFAIT coordinated extensive focus groups of women entrepreneurs to obtain their input and validation of the Trade Research Coalition report. This was particularly important as an alternative means of further extending Canadian women's participation in the Trade Summit.

Women own or operate nearly one-third of all Canadian firms and employ 1.7 million people - creating jobs at four times the national average. Despite this, women are traditionally reluctant to venture into foreign markets. In order to address this situation, together with the Royal Bank and the Export Development Corporation, DFAIT sponsored the first-ever international trade mission designed exclusively for women. It was held from November 12 to 14, 1997. The Canadian Business Women's Trade Mission to Washington was designed to introduce potential exporters to the US market, and introduce Canadian companies to potential business partners in the mid-Atlantic states. The Government of Canada has set a target of doubling the number of exporters by the year 2000.

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Canada plays a lead role in advancing the interests of women in APEC. Canada's goal is to ensure that APEC recognizes the specific realities of women's lives and systematically considers the implications of gender in its work. Canada was instrumental in the establishment of the Women Leaders' Network, an APEC-related body which has met annually since 1996. In 1997, during Canada's year as Chair of APEC, Canada successfully initiated the concept of a Ministerial Meeting on Women in APEC, which was held in the Philippines in October 1998, on the theme of Women in Economic Development and Co-operation in APEC. This was the first Ministerial-level meeting on women in a multilateral trade-related organization. APEC Leaders endorsed the recommendations of the Ministerial Meeting, including the recognition of gender as a cross-cutting theme in APEC, and the development of a Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC, to be prepared for the APEC Leaders' meeting in September 1999 in New Zealand.

The Government of Canada has also worked to fast-track Aboriginal businesswomen into the APEC trade environment. As a lead-up to the Women's Leaders Network and the APEC Trade Ministerial meetings in June 1999, a three-day conference was organized to bring Aboriginal businesswomen together from each of the 21 APEC countries. The conference built awareness of the scope of APEC for Canadian Aboriginal businesswomen; provided them with an introduction to potential trading partners from 20 other countries; and built their knowledge of the APEC trade process and their opportunities for trade. Recommendations from the conference will also be conveyed to the APEC Trade Ministers concerning the requirements and importance of Aboriginal businesswomen.

Overall Lessons Learned for Women and the Economy

- Closing gender gaps in income and earnings will require that solutions be sought both within and outside of the labour market. Specifically, in order to advance women's equality in the economy, there must be greater sharing of paid and unpaid work between women and men. This will require changes in policy and attitudes in Canada. For example, increasing information about all types of work may lead to a better understanding of the relationship between market and non-market work in the economy.

7. Women in power and decision-making

Promoting women's participation and representation in governance and decision-making at all levels of political, economic and social life are essential steps in improving women's status and well-being. They are fundamental prerequisites for women's equality and the promotion of women's human rights. They also ensure that society benefits from the talents and capabilities of all its members.

In the last decade, women have made impressive advances in numbers and influence in political, economic and social contributions. Women remain under-represented in decision-making positions, however, especially at senior levels in the public and private sectors. An increasingly important gap is the low participation rate of women in science and technology. As well, women are still a minority among professionals working in such fields as the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics.

The Government actively promotes and reinforces the realistic and positive portrayal of women as decision-makers and leaders. For example:

- Canadian Forces recruitment advertising portrays women as equal partners in the National Defence team. Women also represent 50% of the government's public service Management Trainee Program;
- the promotion of women in business, broadcasting, telecommunications and engineering;
- the production of a series of videos on women and work, including films on women in agriculture;
- the creation of new strategies to increase women's opportunities to coach sports at the national level, as well as to celebrate their achievements; and
- internal government communications sectors frequently highlight the achievements of women employees.

Political Participation

Women's representation in politics in Canada has steadily increased since the 1980s, when women represented only five percent of federal members of Parliament. As of December 1998, women comprise 60 of the 301 members, or 19.9%, of the elected members in the federal House of Commons. As of April 1999, there were nine female Cabinet Ministers. Within the appointed federal Senate, women constitute 32 of the 104 senators, or 30.8%. Both represent the highest number of women in federal politics in Canadian history.

As of January 1999, women comprise 149 of 811, or 18.4% of the members of the elected members of provincial and territorial legislatures. These numbers have also steadily increased since the 1980s.

The encouragement of the participation of women in political parties differs from party to party. Some parties have separate women's organizations whose objectives include the recruitment and training of women. Others have provisions for equal numbers of women and men in executive positions and in delegations for party conventions, and some have experimented with quotas for the number of women candidates in general elections

With financial assistance from Status of Women Canada, *La Maison des femmes des Bois-Francs*, a Quebec-based group, organized a symposium to assist women's entry into politics and other decision-making arenas, and to develop strategies and concrete tools.

Employment Equity Act

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has the responsibility under the *Employment Equity Act* to audit federally regulated businesses to ensure that they have taken appropriate actions, as set out in the legislation, to ensure that women are fairly represented in the workplace. The first full year during which the *Act* was in force was 1998. In that period, the Commission undertook over 100 audits. Results were lower than expected in that only two employers were found to be in compliance with the *Act*; on the other hand, most other employers audited have agreed to bring themselves into compliance within the year. Although it is too early to draw any firm conclusions on the impact of the *Act* on the representation of women in employment, the reports submitted by employers show that in the private sector the representation of women in employment has increased from 41% in 1987 to 44.6% in 1997. The corresponding figures in the public sector are 42% and 50.5%, respectively. At the same time, women remain under-represented in management and non-traditional occupations in both the public and private sectors.

Representation on Boards and Judicial Appointments

The federal government acts to ensure that gender balance is considered when proposing candidates for appointments to federal boards and agencies. Some departments have developed guidelines for use in this regard, while others are establishing data banks of qualified women who can be considered for appointments to boards and commissions.

Between April 1, 1994 and March 31, 1998, a total of 3,021 appointments were made to federal boards and commissions. Of this total, 1,930 appointees were men and 1,091 were women.

The federal government continues its efforts to recommend women for appointments to the federal judiciary. In 1997, 17 of 39 judicial appointees were women, while in 1998, 17 of 55 were women.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

During 1996, it became evident that many female applicants were unsuccessful in passing the Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation (PARE) for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The main reason was the lack of upper body strength. To alleviate the problem, recruiting personnel, with the assistance of the "B" Division (Newfoundland) Fitness/Lifestyle Coordinator and "Depot" Division (formerly the RCMP Training Academy) Fitness Staff, developed a training program specifically designed for female applicants in preparation for PARE. This program is available to all applicants, regardless of gender. Since its inception, a vast improvement has been noted in PARE test results for female applicants.

The RCMP are continuing to develop initiatives to have the number of instructional staff correspond to the proportion of women, visible minority and Aboriginal members throughout the RCMP workforce. Policy on the recruitment of applicants from designated groups has also been established based on the need to make the RCMP representative of the clients it serves and to ensure that recruiting supports community policing principles.

Farm/Rural Women

In 1994, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Agriculture adopted a record of decision on the advancement of farm women, recognizing farm women's essential role as economic partners for a prosperous agri-food industry. The Ministers agreed to promote and support initiatives enabling farm women to participate to a much greater extent in policy and decision-making fora affecting the operation and development of the agricultural sector. Part of their commitment to advancing farm women in leadership and decision making was their agreement to meet with farm women leaders annually. Since 1994, the federal Minister of Agriculture holds annual business meetings with leaders of national farm women's organizations.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) monitors Canada's progress on the advancement of women in decision-making by inviting Provincial Ministries of Agriculture to submit annual updates on any measures taken in their provinces to increase women's participation in policy and decision making or to ensure that more women are appointed to agencies, industry boards, commissions, etc. Responses are analyzed and a summary report distributed to the provinces as well as to farm women's organizations.

Through the Farm Women's Bureau, AAFC conducts regular meetings with national farm women leaders, as well as regular conference calls, to exchange information on priority issues and activities, and obtain their input in departmental work planning.

Since 1996, AAFC continues to work towards improving women's participation in departmental and industry consultations by monitoring participant lists, and providing names of farm and rural women participants to conference and consultations organizers.

To increase women's representation in decision-making fora, AAFC developed a national farm/rural women's talent bank for reference by senior officials when considering appointments to agricultural agencies, boards and commissions.

In partnership with other departments, AAFC has provided funding to farm and rural women's groups through various departmental programs for projects related to issues such as: health and farm safety; rural child care; family violence; social, economic and legal rights for farm women; organizational development; and participation of farm and rural women at national and international conferences, including the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women and most recently, the Second International Women in Agriculture conference in Washington, D.C.

Examples of Obstacles/Lessons Learned

- In the past, farm and rural women's organizations have relied on government grants to carry out their projects. Today, such groups are encouraged to increase memberships and strengthen leadership toward becoming more self-sufficient. The transition from government dependency to self-sufficiency is one of the greatest challenges facing SWC's client women's groups. Through the Farm Women's Bureau and other government partners, such as SWC, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will continue to work closely with farm and rural women's groups to help them through that transition.

Women in Sport

Access and equality is a strategic direction of Sport Canada that applies to women in sport. In order to receive funding from Sport Canada, National Sport Organizations (NSOs) must have a policy in place demonstrating commitment to equity and access for women.

As part of the accountability agreements with NSOs, there are minimum expectations which set out targets for each organization to meet in the area of women in sport. One of these minimum expectations is the "gender snap shot," which provides information on services to and opportunities for women and men. The snap shot was also used as a condition for organizations receiving new funding for sport.

NSOs are working towards achieving 40 per cent representation of women among their boards of directors, executive committees, standing committees, athletes, coaches and officials.

Consultation with Women in Leadership Roles

The Government of Canada continues its practices of ongoing consultation with women's organizations and other community leaders on key issues of concern to women. For example, since 1994, the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for the Status of Women have consulted with women's organizations on the topic of women and violence. Similar consultations have been held on the development of the Centres of Excellence on Women's Health and on issues relating to sustainable development. Bi-annual consultations are also held with national women farm leaders.

Civil Society

The Government of Canada has also provided funding support for projects undertaken by women's and other equality-seeking organizations, that are aimed at addressing the issue of the participation of women in decision-making. Initiatives funded include the following:

- In response to the creation of **Nunavut**, Canada's newest northern territory, the Inuit Women's Association of Canada (Pauktuutit) implemented an education strategy for generating public support for gender equality in the Nunavut legislature and the full participation of Inuit women in self-government efforts. This was accomplished with the financial assistance of the Women's Program. Pauktuutit's work focused on the proposal for gender parity in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, and encouraged women's participation in the plebiscite on gender parity. Pauktuutit held education and strategy sessions with women from across the North, developed a web site to post information throughout the plebiscite process, and taught women how to use telecommunications tools and the information highway in networking and coalition building. In the end, although the plebiscite results did not adopt the gender parity proposal, there was widespread public debate about the proposal, laying the groundwork for future public policy discussions on gender equality.

- The **Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSNWA)** researched the traditional role of Mi'kmaq women in community decision-making and further worked at defining a role for Mi'kmaq women in the self-government process. Through its efforts, the NSNWA successfully acquired official status in the NS/Canada Tripartite Forum on native self-government in 1997, thus facilitating Native women's involvement in setting public policy on the critical issue of self-government for Native people in Nova Scotia.

- The **Aboriginal Women's Action Network** received funding in 1997/98 to undertake research on the impact of Bill C-31 on Aboriginal women in British Columbia, and on the extent of inequities in status and membership and consequently, the access to decision-making and resources. By way of interviews and questionnaires, research is being conducted, primarily with urban Aboriginal women throughout the province, to identify issues related to band membership, access to homelands, and rights for Aboriginal women. In partnership with other urban Aboriginal groups, a strategy is being developed to address identified issues, and improve women's access to band membership and the self-government process.

- Through the Government of Canada, the **Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund** is providing $80,000 to farm and rural women's organizations to undertake leadership development and strategic planning workshops in order to revitalize and strengthen their organizations' leadership.

- Through the Aboriginal Women's Program, the Government of Canada supports Aboriginal women's groups, both on- and off-reserve, primarily to strengthen their capacity at the community level, with some attendant support at provincial/territorial and national levels, to assure their full and equitable participation in the consultations and decision-making surrounding Aboriginal self-government initiatives.

- Sport Canada provides funding to the **Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport** (CAAWS), which works with the sport and active living community to achieve gender equality. CAAWS conducts Women in Leadership workshops to enhance the skills of existing women and sport leaders. These workshops will also help cultivate a new generation of leaders.

International activities

Through support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)'s regional gender equity fund, more that 3,000 women in Colombia, including indigenous and visible minority women, have taken advantage of training courses in leadership, negotiation, local management and public speaking, in order to develop the skills they need to confidently run for office. In communities and regions assisted by CIDA, the political participation of women increased by 50 per cent between 1995 and 1997.

Canada has been a strong advocate of efforts to increase the number of women in decision-making positions, and to achieve the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA) target of having women hold 50% of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000 in the UN Secretariat. Canada promotes these objectives in a number of international fora, including the Organization of American States (OAS).

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has promoted engagement by indigenous women in power and decision-making by inviting the leaders of national indigenous women's organizations to consultations on international indigenous issues. DFAIT made financial contributions to permit indigenous women to attend sessions of the WIPO Fact-finding Mission to Canada on Intellectual Property Rights and Indigenous Peoples, during its cross-Canada tour in November 1998.

8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

(See also Part I for information on gender mainstreaming and data development)

Since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its report on women's equality in 1970, Canada has developed and maintained a multi-level national machinery for promoting the advancement of women. There are Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, supported by government organizations dedicated to advancing women's concerns. Some jurisdictions also have government-funded arm's length advisory councils on women.

All provincial and territorial governments also have a status of women machinery in the form of ministries or directorates, which work toward the integration of gender in the areas of their responsibility - namely, health, social services, education and the administration of justice.

Collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments is undertaken through the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Status of Women machinery of government to achieve women's equality.

Machinery for the Advancement of Women in the federal government

Within the federal government, Status of Women Canada is responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of the commitments made in the *Federal Plan* and co-ordination of the implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action*. The following outlines some of the major components of Canada's national machinery for the advancement of women and recent initiatives.

Status of Women Canada (SWC)

Created in 1976, SWC reports to the Secretary of State (Status of Women), who is responsible for representing gender equality interests in Cabinet. Since 1995, the various mechanisms within the federal government to advance women's equality have been consolidated into SWC. The goals of this consolidation are: to strengthen the government's efforts to advance women's equality by creating a single-window operation; to enhance access to government; and to strengthen links with local, regional and national women's organizations, other NGOs and other representatives of civil society.

SWC's primary responsibilities include the following: conducting gender-based analysis of legislation, policies and programs; making recommendations for changes, and using other tools and information to ensure that government decisions promote gender equality; promoting gender-based analysis throughout the federal government; representing Canada internationally on gender equality issues; supporting policy research and its use in policy development; providing financial assistance to women's and other voluntary organizations; and assessing trends and progress.

Health Canada
The Women's Health Bureau has a complement of 15 staff responsible for promoting gender-based analysis of policies and programs within the federal ministry of health. It develops health sector-specific tools and training, and provides consultation and resource materials. It has developed a ministry-level strategy to advance women's health issues.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
Resource and research initiatives undertaken by the Women's Bureau include the development of a *Gender-based Analysis Guide* (1997) and *Gender-based Analysis Backgrounder* (1997). HRDC has undertaken a number of policy, program and research initiatives to contribute to the federal government's agenda on gender equality, and to integrate women's perspectives into its policies and programs through the use of gender-based analysis. These initiatives include co-sponsorship of the Symposium on gender equality indicators (with SWC, Statistics Canada and Health Canada in 1998), a sector study of child care in Canada, and research exploring the dynamics of unpaid work.

Justice Canada
In 1996, the Department of Justice established the Gender Equality Initiative with the goal of preventing and eliminating systemic gender discrimination in the Canadian justice system, as well as in the management of policies and practices of the Department of Justice, in accordance with section 15 and 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This Initiative ensures that the needs of women in the justice system and the Department of Justice are taken into account in all of the Department's substantive work and management practices.

The Department of Justice created the Office of the Senior Advisor on Gender Equality, with a Senior Advisor on Gender Equality (SAGE) and two Gender Equality Analysts. A network of trained Gender Equality Specialists across the department provide support to the Office of the SAGE.

The major activities of the SAGE office include the following: designing analytical tools to conduct gender equality analysis in the areas of litigation, legal opinion, legislative drafting, policy and program development, and management practices and policies; and developing and offering training modules on the application of gender equality in law.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (DIAND)
In February 1998, the Office of the Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues and Gender Equality was established. In November 1998, senior management approved DIAND's Gender Equality Policy. An implementation plan for Gender Equality in DIAND and a manual for the application of gender equality analysis are expected in 1999.

Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)
DFAIT's Departmental Coordinator on International Women's Equality is situated within the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women's Equality division. The Coordinator heads the International Women's Equality section, which functions as the focal point on gender within the department to promote gender equality and the human rights of women, including integrating gender perspectives into foreign policy development and operations. Canada's international efforts to promote gender equality include promoting and supporting the work of international organizations to integrate gender considerations, such as the UN Economic and Social Council's adoption of agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming; and mainstreaming
efforts underway at the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and APEC.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
CIDA's Gender Equality Division is responsible for articulating CIDA policy and good practices in Gender Equality (GE). Activities include the following: the development of mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives into CIDA management, planning and performance assessment system; contribution to the Agency knowledge base on Gender Equality; participation in conferences and international policy dialogue on GE; and management of information on GE issues, particularly lessons drawn from GE policy implementation in developing countries. Gender analysis and gender equality results are to be incorporated into all of CIDA's international co-operation initiatives.

In 1998, CIDA undertook a series of extensive consultations with partners in Canada and around the world to revise its policy on gender equality. Based on these consultations, the policy update presents a strong gender mainstreaming, rights-based, and results-based approach to better serve policy makers and people in the field. CIDA officially launched the update of its Gender Equality Policy on International Women's Day, March 8, 1999.

Civil Society
Status of Women Canada has a network of regional representatives who maintain regular contact with women's and other equality-seeking organizations across the country. Through the Women's Program, SWC also provides financial and technical support to a wide range of women's and equality-seeking organizations at the community, regional, provincial and national levels. In 1996-97, a total of 384 projects and organizations were funded with grants totaling $8.2 million

In addition to financial support, a wide range of other non-monetary, technical assistance is provided to funded and non-funded groups and individuals. This has included identification of alternate funding sources; sharing of data, resources and information on best practices; direction on organizational development and institutional change; direct involvement in the development of projects; and follow-up to ensure successful completion.

The Aboriginal Women's Program is the primary source of federal funding to Aboriginal women's organizations for the purpose of improving their socio-economic and political status.

It enables Aboriginal women to advance their interests through activities and projects that improve social conditions, cultural retention and preservation, economic well-being and leadership development, while maintaining cultural distinctiveness.

Consultations with NGOs

Consultation is important for proactive government planning and development. Consultation provides the government with direct access to the ideas and concerns of Canadian women on public policy issues affecting them. Consultations may take place through meetings of women's organizations with the Secretary of State (Status of Women) and other Cabinet Ministers, through formal consultation exercises, and informally or by other means.

In 1996, SWC undertook a series of consultation meetings with constituents across Canada, seeking advice on various aspects of the agency's work. One of the results of that process was the development in 1997 of a Discussion Paper on types of formal and informal consultation approaches, frequency and resource implications of future activities. The Paper was circulated to women's organizations and other groups committed to women's equality, for their comment. SWC is currently developing a Consultation Policy, to be published in the near future.

International activities

Building on Canadian experience in the areas of gender mainstreaming and gender-based analysis, CIDA has supported a number of projects to strengthen national machineries in developing countries. In Asia, for example, CIDA's gender equality projects underway in Indonesia, the Philippines and Bangladesh assist government bodies at different levels to mainstream gender in their plans and budgets, to implement gender and development policies, and to provide gender training to staff.

Data Collection and Dissemination

Statistics Canada continues to collect data on individuals by sex and to make improvements in the collection and analysis of gender-relevant data, in particular in the area of unpaid work.

- The 1996 Census included questions on unpaid work for the first time and several analytical studies are underway using this data, with a focus on improving our understanding of intra- and inter-household patterns of care.
- Canada's third major time-use survey was conducted in 1998 and expanded to include a larger sample of the population. Canada has established a Total Work Accounts System that includes paid and unpaid work.
- Canada also values unpaid work in monetary terms for comparison with traditional economic measures such as GDP and continues work to improve valuation methodologies.
- A symposium on gender equality indicators, examining both data and policy issues brought together statisticians, policy analysts, academics, other levels of government, international experts and a range of social policy actors outside government, including women's organizations. Recommendations for future work were made and some are in the process of implementation. A report of the symposium is publicly available. Three key statistical publications on the situation of women and men are in progress, intended for release by June, 2000.

9. Human Rights of Women

In Canada, there are several pieces of legislation protecting women's human rights, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and other laws prohibiting discrimination, such as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

At international and world conferences -- including the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Fourth UN World Conference on Women -- and in its relations with other countries, Canada consistently stresses the importance of the full realization of women's human rights. For example, Canada played a lead role in ensuring that *Habitat Agenda and Global Plan of Action*, the 1996 Habitat II conference document, acknowledged the empowerment of women, and their full and equal participation in political, social and economic life as essential to achieving sustainable human settlements.

Because a gender perspective is not yet systematically taken into account, policies, laws and practices in our justice system do not always accommodate the different needs and experiences of women, and frequently discriminate against them. As well, women may face additional barriers to justice because of their racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Key advances in the area of women's human rights in Canada include the following:

- the reinstatement of the Court Challenges Program in 1994;
- the re-establishment of the Law Reform Commission in 1997; and
- the addition, in 1996, of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Other justice system initiatives include seeking to improve the criminal justice system by making it more accessible to vulnerable groups, including Aboriginal women and women with disabilities.

Federal-Provincial/Territorial Initiatives

In 1997, the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women Working Group on Gender Equality in the Justice System successfully obtained the agreement of the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Justice Ministers to consider input from national and provincial/territorial women's ministries in the drafting of the Justice Ministers' 1997 update of their *Report into Gender Equality in the Canadian Justice System*. This will ensure that a gender perspective is more effectively incorporated into this document.

Improving the Conditions of Women in Federal Prisons

In 1996, Madame Justice Arbour led a Commission of Inquiry, known as the Arbour Commission, which looked into a disturbance at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. The Commission released a report, *Creating Choices* that made recommendations to ensure consistent improvement in the management of federally sentenced women. *Creating Choices* recommended the replacement of the Prison for Women with small, purpose-designed and built regional facilities and, for Aboriginal women offenders, a Healing Lodge. After over five years of work and planning, the four regional facilities and the Healing Lodge are now all operational.

Opening these facilities meant much more than physical design and construction. For example, there is a national program strategy for women offenders which has resulted in the development of several new women-specific programs including a women's substance abuse treatment program, a parenting program, a survivors of sexual abuse and trauma program and a mother-child program. Staffing for these new facilities is also tailored to the particular needs of women offenders. This is reflected in the selection process and selection tools for potential staff and in the staff training component. At present, 85% of federally sentenced women are now housed in these facilities, compared to 100% at the maximum security Prison for Women in 1997-98.

Creating Choices also made recommendations on community correctional services for women. These recommendations, along with the results of a field survey and other reports were discussed at the Women Offenders Community Corrections Strategy Workshop held in Toronto in March 1996. Despite the problems and issues identified at the 1996 Workshop, there do not appear to be the type of systemic shortcomings which would unfairly limit women offender's release to the community. Women offenders are released to the community at a higher rate than men offenders. Currently over one half of all women sentenced to the federal system are in the community as compared to one third of all men offenders. While there are women who are suspended and or revoked in many cases due to relapsing into substance abuse (a critical criminogenic factor for women offenders), there are relatively few women offenders who recidivate with a violent offence. Consequently, Correctional Services Canada is exploring the expansion of the use of "halfway back" options for women under supervision who are experiencing difficulties with maintaining a substance abuse-free lifestyle rather than returning them to the institution. Since there are relatively few women in such circumstances at any given time in one location, such strategies are developed and implemented on an individual basis.

Correctional Research

In 1996, the Research Branch of Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) began a process to review current offender assessment and classification procedures, with an explicit focus on women offenders. Results of the review process provided evidence that our current assessment and classification instruments are both reliable and valid for female offenders. However, it was also suggested that the evaluation of women offenders should address issues that might be particularly relevant to their potential for successful reintegration.

Current initiatives in the development of new assessment /classification tools reflect these concerns. In particular, CSC has commenced a process to include gender-specific considerations at the *inception* of tool development. For instance, present projects include the development of a security reclassification tool for women offenders. The protocol addresses issues that may be particularly relevant to women and is being constructed with a large sample comprised *uniquely* of women offenders.

Correctional programs and program evaluation research are also becoming more specialized to recognize gender-specific issues. CSC is currently involved in several projects that support this reality. The development of a research-based program paradigm for women offenders with antisocial attitudes is underway. Preliminary analyses of the cognitive skills and substance abuse programs for women have been completed, and a national evaluation of the Peer Support Team program is nearing completion. Finally, CSC's Research Plan for 1999/2000 will include a comprehensive framework for the evaluation of the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) programs for women.

Sexual Harassment

In 1998, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) acted to address more effectively the issue of sexual harassment. CHRC recognized that writing an anti-harassment policy can be a daunting task, particularly for small employers. In cooperation with Human Resources Development Canada and Status of Women Canada, the Commission prepared model anti-harassment policies for the workplace. Two policies were developed: one for use by medium-sized and large employers; and one for small employers.

International activities

Canada continues to promote the human rights of women in international fora including the United Nations, la Francophonie, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth and the OAS. At the 49th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Canada introduced a resolution on integrating women's human rights throughout the UN system.

In partnership with a Canadian human rights NGO, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) produced an annual report, entitled *For the Record: The United Nations Human Rights System*. The report condenses UN documents relating to human rights, and organizes them into country-specific and thematic sections. The UN's consideration of women's human rights is summarized in both sections. The thematic section on women's human rights includes summaries of the work of the SRVAW, the women-specific resolutions of the CHR and GA, and CSW activities. The country-specific sections include elements of the reports of the UN mechanisms and bodies relating to women's human rights.

Canada promoted the human rights of women in the follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (VDPA). In the Economic and Social Council

(ECOSOC) Agreed Conclusions 1998/2, Canada worked to strengthen language on the importance of measures to integrate women's human rights throughout the UN system, drawing on past CHR resolutions; and to recognize the importance of system-wide cooperation in efforts to eliminate violence against women, including ensuring follow-up to the recommendations of the SRVAW.

As part of the Vienna+5 process, DFAIT provided funding for a three-day Global NGO Forum on Human Rights, which was held in Ottawa. The Forum brought together 250 representatives from 150 NGOs and indigenous peoples' groups to assess the overall situation of human rights. The Forum focused on a number of themes, including women's human rights.

Canada strongly supported the adoption of an effective Optional Protocol (OP) to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) creating both an individual complaints mechanism and an inquiry procedure. Canada was among those countries that originally proposed language in the VDPA calling for an OP to CEDAW which was adopted and subsequently reaffirmed in the PFA.

Canada emphasizes the importance of the ratification of CEDAW and the strengthening of the Committee overseeing its implementation. In order to address the lack of meeting time available to the Committee - the shortest of any of the six human rights treaty monitoring bodies - Canada has officially accepted an amendment to article 20(1) of the CEDAW.

Canada continues to promote women's human rights in bilateral relations and through regional organizations, such as in the development for the year 2000 of the Inter-American Program for Women of the OAS.

Canada supports the reaffirmation of women's rights as an indivisible, inalienable, integral part of human rights throughout the five-year review process of the commitments made at UN world conferences, including in the Beijing *Platform for Action*.

In El Salvador, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Fund for Democratic Development and Human Rights supported women's participation in the work of the Human Rights Commission, which included defending and promoting women's rights, and in particular, raising women's awareness of their civil and electoral rights. CIDA has played a key role in advocating for increased attention to women's rights in refugee assistance, especially in implementing the guidelines on sexual violence against women and girls.

10. Women and the Media

(See also initiatives under Violence)

The portrayal and representation of women in the media do not reflect the diverse lives and changing place of women in Canadian society. In the media, women's voices are heard less often, their roles are limited, stereotyping is common, and issues and perspectives important to women are often marginalized. Media violence and sexual objectification are serious concerns.

Through a mix of legislation, regulation, advocacy inside and outside the industry, industry self-improvement, changes in public expectations, voluntary guidelines, as well as education and training, Canada has made progress on advancing women's equality in the media. Examples of initiatives undertaken in this area include the following:

- The Jeanne Sauvé Awards provide women in the Canadian communications field with opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of federal communications policy, the role of government and its impact on industry, through annual eight- to ten-week internships with the Department of Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

The Government of Canada supports and promotes the application of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) voluntary code of ethics regarding sex-role portrayal for television and radio programming, as well as the code of ethics endorsed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Through the Canadian Advertising Foundation's Gender Portrayal Guidelines, the federal government works to encourage proactive cooperation and contribution by the advertising community to ensure that advertising reflects the full diversity and realities of the lives of women and men.

Among professional organizations, the Canadian Association of Journalists has organized an annual conference on women and the media since 1991, which includes workshops on a variety of issues.

Public Awareness Campaigns

Through a partnership between six federal departments and the CAB, the Public Awareness and Community Action Campaign on Violence in Society was launched in April 1994. The contribution resulted in over $6 million in broadcasting airtime. The campaign featured a series of public service announcements focusing on the theme "Speak Out Against Violence". In 1995-96, a new series of public service announcements was launched dealing with violence against women and children, and media literacy. An evaluation of this project has been completed which shows that this was a very successful partnership between the public and private sectors.

Civil Society

The media are among many influences that contribute to gender-role acquisition. Researchers studying the effects of stereotyping in the media typically begin with some general assumptions of gender-role acquisition and apply it to the issue of media. Recognizing these premises, the Government of Canada supports the work of NGOs. Some examples include the following:

- MediaWatch conducts workshops and training sessions on gender issues with newspapers and other media organizations, and offers student placements. The Media Awareness Network is an award-winning, non-profit organization whose web site supports media education in Canadian schools and promotes media awareness on media issues, including gender issues.

- Through Status of Women Canada funding, the Students Commission of Canada held a workshop, entitled "Challenge Those Images!" in 1998 to address the negative portrayal of young women in the media. The session brought together young women from across Canada, media industry representatives, women's organizations and government officials. Through the workshop, participants learned how to influence media professionals and other relevant decision-makers more effectively.

International activities

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides ongoing support to media and information-sharing organizations involving women, such as the International Women's Tribune Centre and the Interpress News Agency. CIDA has also assisted women's rights organizations, such as the Centre for Women's Rights in Honduras, to use the media to communicate messages and information to women. It also helps to promote public understanding of women's rights and other equality issues, such as the public education campaigns carried out by Senegalese NGOs during International Women's Week.

11. Women and the Environment

Sustainable development recognizes that satisfying human needs and improving the quality of human life must be based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of all of society's resources - natural, human and economic. It ensures that the present generation can meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Canada is committed to including women's perspectives on achieving sustainable development.

International activities

Canada is at the forefront in promoting the mainstreaming of gender across the international sustainable development agenda. Canada promoted the integration of a gender perspective in the texts of international sustainable development agreements, including the review and assessment of the Rio Summit and recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Canada has proposed and supported texts that promote gender equality or the integration of a gender perspective in a number of areas of sustainable development, including all levels of decision-making, poverty alleviation, health, population, human settlements, capacity-building, science, education and awareness, information, and tools for measuring progress.

Canada has also promoted the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in sectoral issues such as sustainable management of freshwater, oceans and forests, protecting biodiversity and combating desertification. For example, Canada promoted the reporting by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s Forestry Department on steps taken to mainstream gender concerns in their activities.

Canadian indigenous women have been fully active in Government of Canada efforts to meet commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has provided financial and policy support for their participation at both the Canadian Open-ended Working Group on the Biodiversity Convention, and at international meetings, such as the Fourth Conference of the Parties and the Madrid Workshop on the UN Biodiversity Convention/Traditional Knowledge. Canada recognizes that indigenous women are often key observers of environmental health and are sensitive to environmental change.

Canada contributed financially to the participation of the delegation from the Pauktuutit/Inuit Women's Association in the 1997 Northern Women, Northern Lives Conference, in Norway. The conference objective was to consider measures for enhancing the contribution of indigenous and northern women towards the achievement of sustainable development in circumpolar countries.

Through the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supported a women's organization in India which has reclaimed unproductive wasteland lost to salt damage by constructing a rainwater catchment system, planting saline-tolerant trees and introducing smokeless stoves to the region. The women also set up their own savings clubs to provide small loans to members and to follow up on new drinking water projects.

Through its support for UNIFEM, CIDA has made possible a project in Mali to train, equip and provide credit for women to establish a waste-disposal business in Bamako. The business prospers and currently provides garbage removal services to 18,000 residents.

12. The Girl Child

(See also initiatives under Women and Poverty; Education and Training; Violence Against Women; and Women and the Media)

The life expectancy of a girl born in Canada is significantly greater than that of a boy. Despite this, gender socialization shapes and limits the lives of girls, particularly in career choices. Girls are often streamed into traditionally "female" jobs. In a world driven by science and technology, girls are relatively uninvolved in these subjects – a fact which has long-term economic consequences for them and for society.

Different communities and age groups of women have their own degree and experience of vulnerability to violence. Various levels of government in Canada and community stakeholders are particularly involved in addressing the specific concerns of the girl child. Some of the recent initiatives include the following:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Community consultations were held to determine the most appropriate ways to raise awareness among members of concerned communities and to develop recommendations for sensitive and effective measures that the federal government can undertake to ensure that FGM does not occur in Canada.

The federal government also sponsored the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVM) to develop a workshop module to be held in communities across Canada to help educate people about the health, legal and social/cultural implications of FGM. NOIVM released the module in August 1998. The government is also working to determine what information health care providers need to be able to provide effective and sensitive health care to girls and women affected by FGM.

Sexual Exploitation

The Government of Canada provided financial assistance for the convening of a Summit on Sexually Exploited Youth in March 1998 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, which provided a forum for victims of sexual abuse to convey their personal experiences. The Summit brought together youth, primarily girls, from the Americas with experience in the commercial sex trade. The Summit successfully developed a Declaration and Action Plan. Canada is now exploring ways to develop support mechanisms such as rehabilitation and counseling, education and training, so that youth, particularly girls, can reintegrate into their communities and the labour force.

Legislation

Bill C-27, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code* (child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and FGM), which came into force on May 26, 1997, targets child sex tourism to allow for the prosecution of Canadians who engage in sexual activity with children while abroad and creates the offence of aggravated procuring with respect to persons living on the avails of sexually exploited youth.

Bill C-51, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, makes it an offence to communicate for the purpose of obtaining services of a sexually exploited youth and allows for wire-tapping to gather information leading to prosecution.

Civil Society

The Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH), a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of children, has been undertaking a number of projects that address the health of girls and young women. In 1997, the CICH produced a report entitled *The Canadian Girl-Child - Determinants of the Health and Well-being of Girls and Young Women*.

With Government of Canada funding, the CICH and its partners are now developing a Girl Child Electronic Network, through which girls and young women around the world could share their stories with each other.

Examples of Obstacles/Lessons learned

- The CICH projects provide good examples of learning about real issues by allowing girls and young women the opportunity to support one another while sharing their views and concerns. It is a model for empowerment.

- In general, there is a lack of recognition that sex and gender are distinctive factors among children that influence their growth and development differently.

SWC provided financial support to women's and other equality-seeking organizations for a variety of issues affecting young women, including the girl child. This included the following:

- funding to the **YM-YWCA of Saint John** in support of the third phase of a research, public education and advocacy project on pornography, and its impact on women and girls;
- funding to the **Canadian Institute of Child Health** in support of the development of a framework for gender analysis of girl child development, a literature and research review of evidence regarding the determinants of healthy development, the identification of key issues and gaps in the knowledge of girls and young women, and the development of a young women's caucus to inform the research agenda; and
- funding to **Kitchener Waterloo and Area Big Sisters** in support of a seven-month pilot project to develop an empowerment and self-advocacy module to assist girls in building strong and healthy relationships to break the cycle of victimization. As part of this latter activity, a tracking system was developed to assess the long-term impact of the empowerment program as model for the National Association of Big Sisters.

- funding to **Saskatoon Communities for Children** in support of a project to pursue implementation of the strategies and recommendations developed by the **Working Group to End the Sexual Abuse of Girl Children by Pimps and Johns**. The project involved working with community groups, and government departments and agencies to establish fiscal responsibilities and time lines for the implementation of recommendations. Outcomes of this work include the establishment and operation of a safe house for street children, parent patrols, increased police presence in stroll areas, and signage to discourage johns from buying sex from children. In order to succeed, this organization developed a joint planning mechanism involving police, provincial government (Justice, Social Services, Health), service providers' groups, tribal councils and others.

International activities

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is in the second phase of support to a $100-million girl child education project in Africa, in which several hundred teachers were trained in child-centered approaches, children's rights and gender perspectives. Gender-sensitive training and learning materials were developed during phase one of the project. The second phase of this multi-country initiative, involving UNICEF and local NGOs, is improving girls' access to primary education, and includes training for teachers, assessing curriculum to ensure gender sensitivity, and the identification and removal of barriers to girls' participation.

In 1996, the Minister of Foreign Affairs appointed a Special Advisor on Children's Rights, with a mandate to provide advice on children's issues, liaise with NGOs, the academic community, business and the public, and to participate actively in national and international activities on children's rights. The Special Advisor on Children's Rights also chairs an interdepartmental committee that is tasked with follow-up to the Agenda for Action of the 1996 Stockholm Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. The focus of the committee is to help develop and promote a Canadian strategy that is aligned with the orientations set out in the "Report of the Rapporteur-General", prepared by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Canada has also been very supportive of the early adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution. Canada has been very active in the negotiations to ensure that the text would oblige states to criminalize these practices, and put into place measures for protection of child victims.

Canada addresses special attention to issues affecting girl children in war-affected regions. These issues were identified as priorities at the October 2, 1998 NGO-Government Dialogue on War-Affected Children, and as priorities in Canada's contributions to the office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG), Olara Otunnu. Among the issues identified were sexual abuse, slavery, child-headed households, the girl as child soldier, as well as other considerations, including health and education.

The Dialogue resulted in the creation of a joint Committee on War-Affected Children chaired by The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)'s Special Advisor on Children's Rights. Canada supports the development of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that would raise the age of recruitment and participation in hostilities.

Canada strongly supported identifying as a war crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court the conscription and enlistment of children under the age of 15 years into national armed forces or groups, and their active use in hostilities. Through its tenure on the UN Security Council, Canada is seeking to enhance the protection of children in armed conflict by addressing the issue within the context of UN peace support operations. Canada actively promotes the involvement of child protection specialists in such operations.

DFAIT appointed the former UNICEF Director for Emergency Programmes as Visiting UN Fellow, to advise the Department and the Minister on children and armed conflict. The Visiting Fellow assisted in drafting a policy framework for Canada on war-affected children. The policy was outlined in a speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Columbia University in New York on February 12, 1999.

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Women and Poverty

New Brunswick Child Tax Credit program provides a $250 refundable credit per year for each dependent child of families with income up to $20,000 and a proportionate amount for those with income over $20,000.

Working Income Supplement will provide families with dependent children and employment income between $3,750 and $25,921, a payment of up to $250 annually.

Through the **Day Care Assistance Program,** the Department of Human Resource Development provides financial assistance to low income families to help them access quality daycare at an approved daycare facility.

Social Housing: to assist one and two parent families, non-elderly singles and senior citizens, who, because of low income, experience difficulty in obtaining adequate and affordable private sector housing. Tenants for public housing rental units are chosen on demonstrated need. The program provides rental housing assistance to some 2,170 families and 2,087 senior citizens.

The Department of Municipalities and Housing administers the **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program** which assists low income homeowners occupying substandard housing to repair, rehabilitate or improve their dwelling to acceptable levels of health and safety.

The New Brunswick Geographic Information Corporation gives an allowance to a maximum of $200 toward the payment of property tax to homeowners whose total family income does not exceed $20,000. Approximately 10,000 homeowners in New Brunswick will qualify for this allowance in 1998.

Education and Training of Women

The Department of Education has implemented several educational programs which emphasize that career choice is for all students and that all occupations are available to both women and men. Amongst others, Futures is a program distributed to middle schools which provides gender inclusive education about all occupations, and invites both young women and men to examine their interests and options as they prepare for high school. Women in Cyberspace was a conference held in October, 1997 which brought together high school girls from every high school in the province to learn about career opportunities in the information technology field. In addition, various information packages, posters and Internet web site pages

supporting non-traditional careers for women have been forwarded to school guidance councilors.

Media Studies at grade 12 level is a prescribed elective course which includes a decoding of media violence, sex roles, stereotyping and misleading portrayals of women. Appropriate parenting skills are developed through curriculum in the Career and Life Management component with the elective course of Family Living at the grade 12 level.

The Department of Advance Education and Labour awards ten scholarships through the Women's Doctoral Scholarships. The Women's Doctoral Scholarships awards up to $5,000 annually to selected women for up to 4 years of doctoral study.

The Department of Human Resource Development and Finance and the Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education and Labour have implemented the Summer Mentorship for Female Students program. This ongoing program provides 14 weeks of summer employment for female students and gives them an opportunity to be mentored by civil servants in senior level positions or women working in non-traditional jobs.

The Department of Advanced Education and Labour oversees the JET Stream Program (Job Experience for Tomorrow). This program provides students with summer jobs to help them finance their education and gives them work experience needed to find a job after graduation. In 1994-95, there were 2,344 JET Stream participants, 1,431 of whom were women (61%).

Women and Health

The Department of Health and Community Services continues to operate Reproductive Health Clinics. The objectives of these clinics are: to decrease the incidence of unplanned pregnancy among adolescents and young, single adults; to promote healthy sexuality and informed decision-making among young people in the province, and; to assist parents to feel more confident in their role as the primary sex educator of their children. The Department of Health and Community Services conducted an information campaign in the fall of 1996 entitled Don't Kid Yourself. The aim of the campaign was to inform teens and their parents on how to reduce risks of teen pregnancy and to promote awareness of existing services.

In 1995, the province of New Brunswick began organized services for breast cancer screening. Before that time, only on third of New Brunswick women over 50 years of age had ever had a mammogram. The objectives of the initiative are to have 70% of women, ages 50-69 years, participate in breast cancer screening services and to increase accessibility of breast cancer screening services for the earliest possible detection and treatment of breast cancer.

Violence Against Women

An **Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence** has been in place since 1989. The Committee has a Plan of Action with identified Key Results Areas. The Committee has been

responsible for the broad range of activities including the development of protocols to facilitate interdisciplinary teamwork in the areas of child abuse, woman abuse, and adult victims of abuse. In addition, awareness and training initiatives have been developed and delivered to a wide range of professionals working in the area of family violence.

Trauma Counseling: to help abused and traumatized children and women effectively deal with the criminal court process. In certain cases, the degree of trauma experienced by victims can prevent the victim from communicating facts surrounding the abuse allegations in a public forum. In those cases, before a charge can be laid or a prosecution can continue, the victim is referred to specialized professional counseling or therapeutic services.

Transition Houses: The Department of Health and Community Services provides 80% of the funding required by 13 transition houses around the Province.

The ***Provincial Caring Partnerships Project*** is a prevention initiative developed by the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence. The Project aims to raise awareness and to prevent family violence. The project is overseen by the Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee, made up of representatives of a variety of not-for-profit organizations and various government departments. It provides support to communities who wish to set up a local committee to raise awareness about family violence. The project is underway in 12 New Brunswick communities and is intended to be province-wide by 1999/2000. The Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee works with communities to develop strategic plans to increase public awareness about the meaning of family violence, the criminality of this type of abuse, its roots and causes, and its effect and impact on society. A Handbook on Community Development, a Media Handbook and a video, *Reaching In/Reaching Out* are tools provided to each community committee. Seed money is also available to communities to enable them to undertake particular activities. In 1996, the administration of the project was transferred from the Department of Justice to the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation.

Workplace Harassment Policy for Municipal Employees developed by the Solicitor General's Task Force on Workplace Harassment to eliminate workplace harassment in police forces and other municipal departments.

Human Rights Commission has been distributing educational materials with respect to workplace discrimination and harassment.

In cooperation with the New Brunswick Chiefs of Police Association, the RCMP and the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, and the Department of Justice, the Department of the Solicitor General has developed a statistical system to collect information on incidents of child and women abuse that come to the attention of the criminal justice system. The gathering of information will assist in the monitoring of the justice system's response to women and child abuse, as well as provide information on what strategies should be implemented to effectively prevent or deal with this important issue.

Public Legal Education and Information Service (PLEIS) of New Brunswick is a non-profit organization which receives financial and in-kind support from Justice Canada, the New Brunswick Law Foundation and the New Brunswick Department of Justice. The Service fosters access to the justice system by informing and educating the public about the law. It places particular priority on reaching disadvantaged groups, including women.

Since 1994, (PLEIS) has undertaken Family Violence Programming which produces products to help abused women understand their rights and which address family violence issues generally. Among many others, one product which has been produced is an educational video entitled "*Changing the Ending*". A booklet called "*Spousal Assault: What do Victims Want and Need From the Police?*" was designed to sensitize police to the needs of abused women.

In cooperation with the Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre and PLEIS, a sexual harassment brochure was developed and distributed to middle and high schools.

The **Department of Education** participate in two of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Family Violence Prevention Teams: Dating Violence Prevention and Peaceful Learning Environment.

School staff have been offered training in areas such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, Second Step, Lions Quest Skills for Growing, etc.

The Department of Education, in cooperation with the New Brunswick Guidance Counselors and PLEIS have developed a brochure on Dating Violence which has been distributed to Middle and High Schools. Transition Houses often present Dating Violence Prevention Programs in high schools as well.

"Making Waves" has been offered for the past four years to students and staff representatives from English high schools and introduced to French high schools this past fall. It is a two-day retreat that helps students understand more fully what dating violence is and its impact on their lives and society.

Women and the Economy

In 1997, women over the age of 15 comprised approximately 45.1% of the New Brunswick labour force.

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has an ongoing entrepreneur program called Self-Start. One of the main target groups is women.

As an employer, the New Brunswick government continues to actively support employment equity initiatives which work towards social, economic and political equality for women in the New Brunswick public sector.

An employer, the government of New Brunswick is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

The employment equity program for women has been in place in Part 1 of the New Brunswick Public Service since 1985. Part 1 of the Public Service includes line departments.

The Department of Advanced Education and Labour provides several programs to help people start their own business. The Student Venture Capital provides students with interest-free loans of up to $3,000. In 1994-95 there were 126 participants, 30 of whom were female. The Entrepreneur Program gives unemployed individuals a chance to run their own business by guaranteeing a business loan with the bank. In 1994, there were 253 participants, 101 of whom were female.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development operates Rural Riches Trading Co., which assists cottage industry producers market their products.

The New Brunswick Farm Women's Association receives funding from the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture. This Association lobbies for women and families living on farms in New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Women's Institute also receives funding from the Department of Agriculture. The NBWI is a provincial organization which works to promote equality for rural women.

The Department of Agriculture continues to sponsor a farm management program. Surveys have found that in excess of 60 percent of New Brunswick farm women have taken business management courses.

Women in Power and Decision-making

In 1998, 8 of 55 members of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick were women (15%).

In 1994, Mrs. Margaret Norrie McCain was the first women to be appointed as Lieutenant Governor of the province of New Brunswick. Following Mrs. McCain, a second women was appointed, Dr. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, in 1997.

In 1999, 4 of 21 Cabinet Ministers were women (19%).

In 1999, 4 of 21 Deputy Ministers in New Brunswick were women (19%).

Of the 711 candidates for positions as municipal councilors and mayors in the municipal elections of May 1998, 191 were women (27%).

Between 1994 and 1998, two out of five appointed provincial court judges were women, bringing the total number of female provincial court judges to three.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

In 1993, responsibilities for women's issues were reassigned from the Women's Directorate to line departments. These departments continue to play a leadership role in the development of policies and programs specific to their mandates which support the women of the province. In 1994, coordination responsibilities were assigned to the Executive Council Office as Chair of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women. The committee is composed of officials involved in the development of social and economic programs and policies that affect the status of women. The Honourable Marcelle Mersereau is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

The New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a body which exists to inform the public on issues of concern to women. It continues to advise the provincial government on issues which directly or indirectly affect women's lives.

Human Rights of Women

Recognition that all persons are equal in dignity and human rights without regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place or origin, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation or sex, is a governing principle sanctioned by the laws of New Brunswick.

Discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment continues to be the largest sources of formal complaints to the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. Out of 189 formal complaints filed between April 1, 1996 and March 31, 1997, 35 complaints were discrimination based on sex and 32 complaints were based on sexual harassment.

Women and the Media

Information not available

Women and the Environment

The Department of the Environment is represented on the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women.

The Girl Child
See Section II and IV

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Education and Training

Your Money, Your Life, Your Way is a resource developed with Ontario's Partners for Change Network, F/P/T Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, representatives of many financial sector companies, and the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. This resource provides information to help young women understand financial planning and the many decisions they must make regarding their financial future. The program is currently being pilot tested with selected grade 9 students in family studies and business studies classes

How Hard Can It Be? is an annotated bibliography that informs teachers, parents and students about math, science and technical fields, and connects them to print and electronic information.

Teaching, Learning, Gender Equity is designed to provide student teachers with information, opportunities for analysis and resources related to gender equity issues. Materials have been developed that recognize girls learn differently than boys and need encouragement to continue studies in such key areas as math and science. The materials were developed in partnership with the Ontario Association of Deans of Education and three faculties of education.

How Hard Can it Be? and *Teaching, Learning, Gender Equity: An overview of Three Education Partnership Projects* are posted on the Internet at http://www.gov.on.ca/owd. Your Money, You Life, Your Way we be available in late Spring 1999.

Violence Against Women

Agenda for Action - Performance Management System

In 1997, the Government of Ontario announced the *Agenda for Action* strategic framework to address violence against women. $2.7M was allocated over four years to implement the strategy. Since 1997, over 40 new initiatives have been undertaken. One key initiative of the strategy is the development of a performance management system for government-funded anti-violence services. The project will enable government and service providers to gauge how abused women and their children have benefited from government-funded programs, and identify how to improve local service delivery. The initiative has drawn on the advice of a group of service providers and representative from ten ministries. Common outcomes and service specific indicators were developed for all violence against women prevention programs, including shelters, victim witness assistance programs, rape crisis centres and

others. Data collection tools, including client questionnaires, have been developed to provide information on the level of client satisfaction. Service providers were also technologically equipped to support the implementation of the performance management system. This initiative allows for ongoing improvements to programs and services. It is currently being implemented.

Highlights of action taken by Quebec to promote equality between men and women, pursuant to the commitments set out in the Beijing *Platform for Action*

The actions described in this document represent only part of Quebec's overall efforts in the area of women's rights and living conditions since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (referred to as the Beijing Conference) in 1995. In fact, the document highlights only the most significant elements, omitting a number of actions that may have been equally beneficial to women and men.

The information supplied here is factual and provides a brief response to the first and second sections of the questionnaire presented to governments by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. This text is not an analytical report. The third part of the questionnaire, which focuses on action undertaken in the 12 critical areas of the Beijing *Platform for Action*, could constitute the basis of an outline for a report to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, "Beijing +5," scheduled for June 2000, if such a report is produced.

1. Follow-up on the Beijing *Platform for Action*

Quebec is the only Canadian province to have explicitly adopted an action plan based on the commitments set out in the Beijing *Platform for Action*. Eighteen months after the Beijing Conference, the Quebec government adopted and implemented the *Action Plan For Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000* [*Programme d'action 1997-2000 pour toutes les Québécoises*]. This instrument does the following:

- It "adapts" the Beijing *Platform for Action* to the situation and values of Quebec society as well as to the specific concerns and circumstances of Quebec women. It is the outcome of wide-ranging discussion and consultation between 35 government departments as well as para-governmental organizations and partners from civil society, notably women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- It provides leverage, support and structure in working toward equality between women and men in the government's ongoing daily activities, particularly in narrowing the socio-economic gap between women and men.

- It provides a reference framework for Quebec's action on the status of women up to the turn of the century.

The program includes three modes of action.

- The three strategic projects constitute the pillars of the action plan. They are strategic in that they seek solutions to major, urgent problems confronting women and necessitate joint action by various government departments and agencies. They comprise:

1. a project based on institutional and political action: "Introducing gender-based analysis in government practices";

2. a project seeking resolution of an urgent social issue: "Preventing early pregnancies and providing assistance to teenage mothers"; and

3. a project on the economic future for women: "Supporting the advancement of Quebec women in science and technological innovation."

- The 43 sectoral actions, under the authority of 22 government departments and agencies, focus on 8 themes related to the 12 critical areas set out in the Beijing *Platform for Action*:

  - employment and entrepreneurship
  - the struggle against poverty and social disparities
  - sharing power
  - education and training
  - health and welfare
  - combatting violence
  - international co-operation
  - recognizing and respecting rights

- The 15 local and regional actions are being implemented to ensure the application of the two main lines of the fifth policy direction, *La place des femmes dans le développement des régions* [women in regional development]. This is added to *Sharing a Future . . .*, the Policy Statement on the Status of Women, adopted in 1993 for a 10-year period.

2. Strategic projects

❑ Gender-based analysis

This strategic project was directly inspired by the Beijing *Platform for Action*. Gender-based analysis (GBA), as defined in Quebec, "is a process that is intended to identify, as a preventive measure, at the creation and development stage, the particular effects of a policy, program or other measures on women and men affected by its adoption, taking into account their different socio-economic and cultural circumstances."

Studies performed since 1998 have concluded that there is no universal method of gender-based analysis. Each country or government must develop its own approach based on the specific characteristics of their society in terms of social, political, economic and legal structures as well as culture and values. GBA is a structured method for shedding light on decisions to be made: it allows advance identification of their unsuspected effects that could create gender equality gaps, thereby jeopardizing the achievement of equality. Employing gender-based analysis requires in-depth knowledge of the factors that lead to

economic, social and cultural disparities between women and men. Detailed gender-based data is a further requirement.

The Government of Quebec has taken the following steps to incorporate GBA in its practices:

- It has reviewed the literature and the experiments on the subject, particularly the work conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Council of Europe. It has also studied experiments currently being undertaken by the Government of Canada, other Canadian provinces (Saskatchewan, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland), the government of New Zealand and Scandinavian governments.

- It has examined existing departmental and government-wide mechanisms for drafting and adopting laws, policies, programs and other government measures.

- It has evaluated gender-based data available from agencies specializing in this area.

- It has organized consultation sessions with university researchers and NGOs.

- It has launched an initial experimental project applying GBA to develop the *Lignes directrices pour les personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie* [guidelines for the elderly who are no longer self-sufficient] by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

- It has prepared a second experimental project on a tax measure applicable to individuals.

- It has identified conditions for successfully adopting GBA in government practices.

- It has determined the tools of choice.

The initial phase of the work showed the great importance of high-ranking government support for an initiative of this kind. Quebec can therefore be proud of the support given by the Premier and the entire government to the project, as well as of the co-operation of the Conseil du trésor and the Ministère du Conseil exécutif.

❑ **Preventing early pregnancies and providing assistance to teenage mothers**

The organizations consulted in the preparation of the *Action Plan For Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000* quickly agreed on the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need for action to prevent early pregnancies and assist teenage mothers. The rate of early pregnancies in Quebec rose by 57 per cent between 1980 and 1992, from 12.6 to 19.8 per 1,000 teenage girls. This significant increase occurred only in Quebec; the Canadian rate remained stable for the same period. In 1993, the rate of early pregnancies was again 19.8 per 1,000 falling to 19.0 per 1,000 in 1994 and 18.5 per 1,000 in 1995; there was thus a period of stabilization followed by a slight drop. This decrease was observed among teenage girls aged 16 to 17. The pregnancy rate among teenage girls under the age of 15, however, seems to have

continued rising: it stood at 4.4 per 1,000 in 1993, 4.6 per 1,000 in 1994, and 5.4 per 1,000 in 1995.

Given the scope and seriousness of the consequences of early pregnancy, action is required by all the authorities concerned. Beyond the potential impact on the psychological and physical health of teenage girls (anemia, hypertension, hemorrhage) and their babies (low birth weight, risk of neglect), pregnancy in adolescence almost always leads to school drop-out and endemic poverty affecting the child.

A consultation session was held on the topic of early pregnancy prevention and assistance for teenage mothers. Some 60 specialists from the fields of university research, health and social services, education, job entry and community organizations participated, as did immigrants, representatives from Aboriginal communities and a group of teenage mothers. As an outcome, guidelines dealing with three themes were formulated: early pregnancy prevention, assistance in decision making, and assistance for teenage mothers. Co-operation among the people working in this field and co-ordinated action will guide the development of approaches, leading to an action plan specifically for this issue.

- **Supporting the advancement of Quebec women in science and technological innovation**

Market globalization, trade liberalization, increasingly sophisticated communication methods, the information superhighway, fast-changing high technology and its role in industrial restructuring—all these factors have led to a genuine economic and cultural revolution with significant effects on the lives of individuals in advanced societies, and particularly on the lives of women.

For women, crucial issues are at stake in this scientific and technological revolution. In Quebec, new information and communications technologies, micro-electronics, new materials, bio- and aerospace technology are emerging as the strategic industrial sectors of the future. In the coming years, the prospects for increased employment and business start-ups are brightest in these high-tech industries, which are research-intensive, employ well-paid and highly qualified staff, and seek to expand abroad.

Despite major progress over the last 30 years in women's access to higher education and the job market, we must note that (with only a few exceptions) progress has been much slower in career training and activities in the sectors of science and technology. Despite recent breakthroughs, the same trend is apparent in the job market and in business start-ups, where women are still under-represented in advanced science- and technology-related sectors.

The ultimate effect of this gender-based segregation in career choices is the perpetuation, and indeed accentuation, of socio-economic disparities between men and women, which is why the Quebec government is concerned about the situation. Obviously, the goal is not to compel women to make choices that go against their own preferences. Rather, it is to

remove the obstacles that stand in the way of fostering and attaining such aspirations among women who are interested and possess the necessary skills.

Through the concerted action of its departments and agencies, the government is attempting to counter this trend toward career segregation and encourage Quebec women to enter the knowledge-based economy. The choices they make, however, are determined by many complex factors, and in the short term some of these offer little scope for government action. A report currently being drafted is intended to fully identify this problem and steer government action in the most effective, sound direction.

3. Main sectoral actions promoting equality

Women in positions of authority

- Between 1995 and 1999, Quebec women broke into the highest levels of the civil service, through appointments by authority of Cabinet. This development is extremely significant, revealing a genuine will to take action in favour of equality. Overall, this represents growth of almost 150 per cent in less than five years.

  - The proportion of women deputy ministers and associate secretaries-general rose from 3.7 to 29.6 per cent
  - The proportion of women assistant or associate deputy ministers rose from 12.5 to 28.6 per cent.
  - The proportion of women heads of agencies rose from 14.2 to 28.3 per cent.

Combatting poverty through help in finding employment

- In October 1996, Quebec created the *Fonds de lutte contre la pauvreté par la réinsertion au travail* [fund to combat poverty through re-entry into the workplace], a unique measure designed specifically for poor people and combining social with economic development. Ten months after its implementation (June 1997 to March 1998), this special C$250 million three-year fund had funded 901 projects at the local, regional and Quebec-wide levels, allowing 8013 individuals (most of them women) to escape from poverty by starting or preparing for a job. Close to half (47 per cent) found jobs, 29 per cent were enrolled in training and 24 per cent were participating in job entry activities or on-the-job training. Participants in the Fund's projects are from the poorest sectors of our society.

Socio-economic measures

- The high unemployment rate, the government's financial situation, and social and economic changes have necessitated new approaches to job creation. Socio-economic measures specifically seek to create stable employment and to develop goods and services of common utility, making it possible to meet the social needs of local and regional

communities using their own resources. The government undertook to contribute C$225 million to socio-economic measures, with C$25 million earmarked for the 1995-96 fiscal year and C$50 million for each of the following four years.

The goal is to eradicate poverty, and in particular, to remedy the precarious situation of women, who are present in high numbers in the target sectors and in socio-economic programs.

Entrepreneurship

- A 1995 study confirmed that businesses owned and operated by women find it more difficult and expensive to obtain financing, which can have a direct impact on the creation and expansion of these businesses. The problem appeared to be most acute for businesses headed by women.

  In view of these findings, in 1998 the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce produced a video entitled *Prêt pour un prêt* [ready for a loan] that explains the process of meeting with a banker to obtain financing. This audiovisual tool is accompanied by a guide written in plain language, with a number of scenarios that illustrate concepts and explain how to put together an application, decipher financial jargon and prepare to negotiate a loan.

Family policy

- In fall 1996, the Government of Quebec announced three new family policy provisions targeting three main objectives:

  - to ensure equity through universal income-based family support, that would provide increased assistance to low-income families;
  - to help parents combine parental and work responsibilities; and
  - to promote child development and equal opportunity.

  This family policy represents a major shift and includes three main components:

  - The new family allowance that was adopted in 1997 and is based on a family's status (single-parent or two-parent), income and number of children.
  - The development of educational and daycare services to ensure: (1) access to full-day kindergarten for children aged 5 and access to half-day daycare or educational services for children aged 4 who are disabled or from disadvantaged backgrounds; and (2) gradual extension of access for children below age 5 to low-cost daycare and educational services (C$5 per child per day). In

September 1998, this measure was extended to children in both kindergarten and elementary school.

- Implementation of a new parental insurance plan designed to replace the bulk of income during maternity and parental leave. This component will be introduced over the next few years.

Career diversification

- Created in 1997, the "Chapeau les filles" [hats off to girls] competition gives prizes to girls and women in technical and scientific training. In 1999 the competition was held for the third consecutive year; 12 participants from across Quebec won scholarships worth C$1,000 each, and 130 scholarships worth C$500 each were awarded to regional winners. Paid on-the-job training and other forms of job search assistance were offered in addition to monetary awards. The competition was organized by the Services de coordination à la condition féminine [status of women co-ordination services] of the Ministère de l'Éducation with the financial support of partners from the private sector, unions, and government departments and agencies.

Support for local and regional action

- In May 1999, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine [secretariat on the status of women] launched the program *À égalité pour décider* [equality in decision making] with a budget of C$1 million over five years. The program is designed to encourage and support initiatives by local and regional women's groups, as well as other community groups, to plan and implement projects that will have a concrete, quantifiable impact on women's representation in decision-making positions. The projects submitted must pursue one of the following objectives:

  - They must facilitate and promote women's access to decision-making positions within local and regional bodies.
  - They must increase the pool of women candidates for these positions.
  - They must prepare and train women to hold these positions.
  - They must help women keep these positions.
  - They must raise awareness within institutions about the need for equal distribution of decision-making positions between women and men.

Combatting violence

- In October 1998, Quebec gave the green light to a violence awareness campaign, *La Violence, c'est pas toujours frappant... mais ça fait toujours mal* [violence may not always be striking . . . but it always hurts]. The campaign focuses on violence in relationships, particularly among young teenagers (ages 13 and 14), and on sexual assault. It encourages girls to say no to controlling and dominating relationships and fosters an appreciation among boys for relationships based on equality. The campaign's C$1.6 million budget was used for the following:

  - a televised message about sexual assault in daily life;
  - information tools, including a tabloid newspaper with a 2.4 million print run;
  - a video clip broadcast on a youth channel; and
  - a special song entitled *Ça fait toujours mal* [it always hurts] composed by a group popular with young people, and a tour by that group to high schools across Quebec.

4. Legislative action

- Between 1995 and 1998, Quebec adopted or amended **60 acts** affecting women's rights and living conditions, including eight major laws.

Act to facilitate the payment of support

The purpose of this act is to determine how and under what conditions rulings are to be made granting support in the form of regular payments to creditors. The law stipulates that the debtor must henceforth make support payments to the Minister of Revenue for the benefit of the creditor, unless otherwise decided by the court. The act establishes two methods for collecting support: at-source deduction of amounts paid periodically to the debtor, or an order to pay the Minister.

Act to amend the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and other legislative provisions

This act prohibits discrimination in insurance plans, pensions and benefits on the basis of pregnancy, sexual orientation or disability. However, it does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, gender or civil status if such considerations are legitimate and founded on actuarial data.

Pay Equity Act

This act is intended to correct wage gaps resulting from systemic gender-based discrimination against individuals who hold positions in female-dominated occupations.

Status of Women

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION BEIJING+5

The Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, in September of 1995, put the world spotlight on issues of concern to women. At that time, member states of the United Nations adopted a political declaration and *Platform for Action* (PFA) to accelerate progress toward equality between women and men. Governments committed themselves to action to address 12 critical and interconnected areas for action.

From June 5-9, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly is convening a special session in New York to review and assess progress in implementing the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA).

This review provides an opportunity for member states of the United Nations to examine how much has been achieved in the past five years. It also offers an opportunity to provide new focus and direction on what remains to be done in order to advance gender equality.

As part of the review and appraisal process, Canada responded to a standardized questionnaire, prepared by the UN, to be used as a framework to identify and assess regional and international trends and best practices in implementing the PFA. The information gathered from responses to the questionnaire has been compiled into a UN report synthesizing trends and best practices. Other information such as statistics collected by the UN and other specialized agencies and commissions have also been considered. The final report will be submitted at the special session. Canada's response to the questionnaire is available on-line at http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/beijing5/quest-e.html.

Canada enters the 21st century with a firm commitment to equality for women in all aspects of the social, economic and political spheres of our society. The following series of fact sheets highlight Canada's accomplishments at home and around the world in response to the 12 critical areas of concern. The fact sheets help identify, at a glance, best practices both at home and abroad, as well as innovative programs and policies undertaken by the Government of Canada to implement the PFA.

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Status of Women

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND POVERTY

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Despite overall improvements in women's earnings and incomes relative to men's in Canada, and recent policy initiatives to benefit those with low-income, the face of poverty is still more likely to be a woman's.

- Some groups are more vulnerable to poverty than others, including female lone-parents, elderly women living alone, Aboriginal women, immigrant and visible minority women and women with disabilities.

- The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' 2000 Report Card on Women and Poverty concluded that even though the poverty focus seems to be on children, it is still a woman's issue. The Report supports a more comprehensive approach to dealing with poverty as envisaged by the UN's Poverty Report in 1997 — one that looks at how women's financial security may be undermined because they must combine paid work with unpaid family responsibilities.

- The National Council of Welfare estimates that total welfare income in 1998 for a single parent with one child ranges from 50% to 69% of the poverty level.

- Housing and homelessness are issues gaining greater attention in Canada. In recent years, the homeless population has often been identified as younger than in the past, with an increasing proportion of single women and homeless families headed by women. Studies indicate that the homeless among women tend to be hidden and therefore have not been counted.

Around the World

- There is a strong relationship between gender inequality and poverty. There is also a strong relationship between eradication of poverty and empowerment of women and gender equality. The four countries that ranked lowest on the UN's gender equality index also ranked lowest in addressing human poverty. All major UN conferences in the 1990s have stressed the direct link between women's empowerment and poverty reduction.

- Women still have less access than men to credit, finance, education, training, employment, and other productive resources, which contributes to their poverty.

- Poverty deepened worldwide during the 1990s as economies restructured to pay down debt and compete in the global marketplace. These trends have created more opportunities in the labour force for women, yet the increase in employment has not been matched by an increase in equality of employment available to women. For example, more women than men are found in the informal sector and precarious forms of employment which are often lower paid and offer less social protection than employment in the formal sector.

- Reductions in publicly funded services have increased the amount of time women devote to caring for children, the ill and the elderly, thus adding to their daily burden. As a result women are available less for paid work or training and more constrained in a competitive labour market.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

Statistics and figures below are from Statistics Canada unless otherwise noted.

- In 1997, almost 5.2 million people in Canada lived in low-income circumstances; 54.5% of them were female. Of the total female population in Canada, 18.9% were

living in low-income situations, compared with 16.1% of the male population.

- In 1997, 56% of all families headed by lone-parent mothers had incomes which fell below the Low Income Cut-off (LICO), a slight improvement from 57% in 1980. The comparable figure for male lone-parent families in 1997 was 24%.

- Of all children in low-income families, 40% were living with a single female parent, accounting for 13% of all children under the age of 18 that year.

- Due to increases in income assistance programs, the incidence of low income among all senior women dropped from 28% in 1993 to 24.1% in 1997 (14% to 12% for men). However, in 1997 49% of unattached senior women were living in low-income circumstances, versus 33% of unattached senior men.

- In 1996, over 45% of Registered Indian women reported government transfer payments as their major source of income, more than twice the percentage of non-Aboriginal women (26.2%).

- In 1995, the rate of poverty for working-age women (aged 15-64) with a disability was twice that of working-age women without a disability: 36% compared to 18% [Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), 2000].

- In 1998, 60% of runaway youth were young women aged 12-17. One-third of homeless youth were female at an average age of 17, compared to the 2/3 who were male at an average age of 18 [CCSD, 1998].

N.B.: Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO) is not official poverty line. LICO is the point where the portion of income spent on food, clothing and shelter is 20 percentage points more than average. The cut-off in 1997 was 55% of income in a large urban centre, $17,400 for a single person, $21,700 for a couple and $32,750 for a family of four.

Around the World

- The absolute number of people living in poverty — earning less than $1US a day — has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.5 billion today, and if present trends persist, the figure will reach 1.9 billion by 2015 (*World Bank Report 1999/2000*).

- Growth of women in the labour force since 1980 has been substantially higher than for men in every region of the world except Africa. Moreover, in most parts of the world, a high share of total labour force growth is due to the growth of women's labour. (Report of the UN Secretary General, the Role of Employment and Work in Poverty Eradication: the Empowerment and Advancement of Women, E/1999/53)

- The number of poor people in South Asia rose by 10% during the 1987-2000 period, with the regional financial crisis playing a major role. In the first half of the 1990s, the number of poor people in Latin American and the Caribbean increased by about 3 million a year; in Sub-Saharan Africa, 51% of the people are living in poverty today. (World Bank, *op.cit.*)

- The proportion of women in poverty has not changed vis à vis men since the early 1990s; 70% of the world's poor are still women and children. (UNIFEM Web site, 2000)

- Economic gender equality is likely to enhance economic growth overall. In Africa, gender inequality in employment opportunities has been estimated to account for a reduced annual per capital growth of 0.7% between 1960 and 1992. Estimating gender discrimination in economic opportunities and pay would increase both women's income and GDP. (Report of the UN Secretary General, the Role of Employment and Work in Poverty Eradication: the Empowerment and Advancement of Women, E/1999/53)

- In many developing and transition economies, strategies for stimulating development of small and medium sized enterprises can encourage employment creation and lead to poverty reduction.

Towards Equality

In Canada

- An array of measures to reduce women's poverty and economic inequality is being pursued by the Government of Canada. Measures such as child support reforms,

employment and pay equity legislation, student loans, tax deductions for child care and other dependant care, maternity and parental benefits and programs to address sexual harassment and gender violence.

- The National Child Benefit (NCB) program was implemented in 1998, designed to support low income families and reduce child poverty. About half of the NCB benificiaries are one-parent families headed by women, the other half being two-parent families.

- National spending on Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits was $1.2 billion in 1998-99. This amount will increase by $900 million per year when the enhanced parental leave plan, providing up to a full year of benefits, come into effect in 2001.

Around the World

- The national action plans of 56 countries for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, establish policies for the eradication of poverty among women, by promoting employment and income generation and improving basic social services and social security systems.

- Helping developing countries reduce poverty is the cornerstone of Canada's development assistance program.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supports microcredit programs in Cameroon to enable savings and loan cooperatives, owned and run by women, to provide loans to rural women. The program provides technical assistance in microcredit management to the cooperatives, which have granted more than 500 loans for a variety of local enterprises.

- A technical assistance project that is helping the Russian Ministry of Labour develop policies to encourage employers to hire and retain women employees is also supported by CIDA; another project supports special women's assistance programs in local business development centres throughout the country.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND POWER

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Women's empowerment has many dimensions and women can be involved in decision-making in many ways — as parents and family members, community activists, consumers, employees, union members, business owners and members of government, non-government and private sector organizations.

- Most women in Canada now participate in the labour force and have access to their own income, which enhances their influence in the household and in public life. They still spend more time caring for children and household however, which increases their time pressure.

- Canada has a well established and influential women's movement but because women have less time and income than men, and because Canada is such a large and diverse country, organizing to have voice in public policy is difficult.

- Women are continuing to make progress in attaining high-level positions in the public and private sectors, although it is not even or rapid.

- Canada has a wealth of data and a growing body of research on gender equality to inform decision-making but some gaps exist, especially regarding advances made by visible minority, Aboriginal or disabled women.

Around the World

- Women's under representation in positions of power and decision-making is linked to women's overall unequal status in society and to structural barriers within political, economic, cultural and social systems in society.

- Many gender biases emanate from inequalities at the household level and in social norms (*World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, 1999)

- In many developing countries and economies in transition, the harsh socio-economic or political realities limit women's ability to participate in political activity. In some countries, "everyday life is so harsh and mere survival in a precarious economic situation or a situation of armed conflict is such a challenge that the questions on participation in politics hardly arises". (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1999)

- Women still place a great deal of emphasis on involvement in non-governmental and community-based organizations as a means to power and influence, especially where barriers to traditional routes to political leadership are strong.

- Participation in local and provincial level bodies is more feasible for women as it has less impact on family life than participation in national bodies that can be great distances from home.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

- Finding time for public life is still a challenge for women. In 52% of families in which both partners had full-time employment, women were responsible for all daily housework and in only 10% of families was there equal sharing. And women still perform the vast majority of child-related work in all family types.

- As of June 1999, women made up 19.9% of the Members of the House of Commons and 29.5% of Members of the Senate. Of Canada's Cabinet Minister, nearly 1/4 are women. In provincial and territorial

legislatures, women represent 20.11% of the Members. Within the federal public service, 1 in 4 Deputy Ministers is a woman. (*Women and Men in Canada: A Statistical Glance*, 1999)

- Among federally appointed judges, 20.7% are now women, up from 15% in 1991. Women also increased their representation among lawyers and notaries 27% in 1991 to 31% in 1996. In 1999, Canada appointed the first woman Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

- Women are also gaining in positions of influence in the business world. From 1994 to 1999, women's representation in senior management positions increased from 19.8% to 26.8%. Their representation in all managerial categories remained the same at 35.1%. In the professional category, women's overall representation has dropped slightly from 52.2% to 51.8% in areas such as nursing and teaching. There were increases in other categories such as medicine, dentistry, natural science, engineering and mathematics and business and finance.

- Women hold 12% of officer positions in Canadian corporations (690/5,746); approximately 25% of Canadian corporations have no female corporate representation and out of 560 of the largest corporations, 12 are female-led. (Catalyst Census of Women Corporate Officers in Canada)

Around the World

- Representation of women in top-level political decision-making is roughly equal to 1995 levels in national governments, but women's share of these positions in the UN secretariat and in the diplomatic corps has increased.

- At lower levels, women are participating in politics and public life in increasing numbers, due in part to the introduction of quotas, targets and affirmative action policies by governments and political parties, but mainly due to the efforts of women's organizations and networks, which have grown immensely.

- As of March 2000, women were 50% of the electors and 13.4% of the members of legislatures worldwide. Women hold an average of 7% of cabinet posts, double that of 1987. (InterParliamentary Union, March 2000).

- In Eastern Europe, women's representation dropped from 20% in 1989 to just 7% in 1998 (IPU, *op. cit.*)

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Each of Canada's major political parties has established programs to encourage and support women federal candidates. Measures include earmarking campaign funds for women, including grants for child care, household help, lost wages and campaign costs and mechanisms to achieve greater gender parity on executives, governing bodies and committees.

- The new *Employment Equity Act* that came into force in 1996 continues to apply to private sector employers under federal jurisdiction and now also includes almost all employees in the federal public sector. It strengthens efforts to ensure that women have access to the full range of occupations and opportunities for promotion.

- The 1995 *Federal Plan for Gender Equality* includes a commitment to a gender-based approach. This policy directs that future legislation, policies and programs will include analyses of the differential impacts on women and men. Efforts to support capacity-building for this activity across government include training, best practice models and pilot projects.

- *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* recognizes that Aboriginal women need to be involved in decisions regarding the future of their communities. The Canadian government provides support to Aboriginal women's groups both on and off the reserve, to promote networking, coalition-building, leadership training and participation in decision-making at the community, provincial, regional territorial and national levels. Priority is given to projects that facilitate greater participation in the policy and strategic development of Aboriginal governments and organizations on self-government.

- Since 1995, Canada's major funding program on gender equality issues has supported over 1,500 initiatives developed by equality-seeking organizations, involving thousands of women and relating to a wide range of issues from violence against women and girls and human rights, to poverty, education and training, and unpaid work.

- Canada recognizes women's diversity by developing relationships and providing financial support to immigrant and visible minority women's groups.

Around the World

- Seventy-five action plans to implement the Beijing Platform for Action (87%) from all regions refer to women in power and decision-making with actions focused on specific mechanisms to increase women's voice and representation in power structures. They include mainstreaming, institutional arrangements, enabling environment, training, public information campaigns, and monitoring and statistics. (UN Review and Appraisal)

- Canada has been a strong advocate of efforts to increase the number of women in decision-making positions and to achieve the Beijing Platform for Action target of having women hold 50% of managerial and decision-making positions in the UN Secretariat by the year 2000. Canada promotes these objectives in a number of international fora, including the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

- Through CIDA, Canada supports leadership training for women political candidates and organizations fostering greater participation of women in democratic politics. For example:

  - in Colombia, 28% of the candidates who received training were elected in the most recent elections, and even those who lost gained valuable experience;

  - in India, a comprehensive development project provides training and counselling for women newly elected to village councils in addition to assistance in health, income generation and microcredit. The project also provides leadership training for women's clubs, girls' groups and grassroots workers in 200 rural villages;

  - in Haiti, an education and training project has facilitated the formation of 8 groups with a regional management committee, as well as their participation in a Women's Federation, a coordinating body that has just received national recognition.

Status of Women

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Women are more likely than men to be high school graduates, but are less likely to have either a trades certificate or diploma or to have completed some other form of non-university training.
- Women make up the majority of full-time students in most university departments. They remain concentrated in the humanities and social sciences, fields with weaker labour market outcomes but are making inroads into traditionally male-dominated fields.
- Overall, women are also somewhat less likely than men to have a university degree, although the gap is much smaller now than in the past. However young women are currently more likely than young men to have university degrees. Women's representation among university graduates also declines sharply the higher the level.
- Among the 25-29 age group, women are now achieving higher levels of educational attainment than men. This is a reversal of historic trends and indicates that policies aimed at improving women's educational outcomes have achieved a degree of success.
- The emergence of the knowledge-based economy and society in Canada has made women's access to education and training even more imperative, particularly in technical and scientific fields.
- Although women and men participate at an almost equal rate in training programs, women actually receive substantially fewer hours than men, an increasing trend through the 1990s.

Around the World

- Education is key to empowering women, leading to greater economic productivity, higher income, smaller families, improved health and higher status for women and girls.
- Access to education by itself is not enough to eliminate harmful attitudes and values held by society.
- Barriers to girls' education include early marriage and pregnancy, gender-biased teaching, lack of adequate and/or accessible schooling facilities, time-consuming domestic responsibilities, priority given to boys' education by parents and schools.

Facts and Figures

Statistics and figures are from Statistics Canada unless otherwise noted.

In Canada

- In 1999, 89% of women in Canada had high school or higher education: 28% held a post-secondary diploma; 14% held a university degree.
- In 1997-98, women made up 52% of college enrolment and 55% of university enrolment; 51% master's and 43% of doctoral ranks.
- In 1998, for all young women and men, 64% of young women aged 22-24 with dependent children left high school before graduating, compared to 28% of young men aged 22-24 with children.
- In 1997, women with university degrees averaged $42,660 for full-time, full-year work while women with high school education averaged $27,500 and women with some post-secondary education averaged $28,300.

- In 1997, women with university degrees earned 74% of their male counterparts' income for full-time full-year work; compared with other post-secondary diploma or certificate: 71%; some post-secondary: 75%; some secondary school: 65%; less than Grade 9: 70%.

- In 1996, over 28.8% of Registered Indian women living on reserve had less than a grade 9 education compared to 15.3% of Registered Indian women living off reserve. Furthermore, Aboriginal women with a university degree experienced an unemployment rate of 7.2% compared to a rate of 27% for those with less than grade 9 education.

- Women's share of all male-dominated fields increased from 21% in 1981 to 34% in 1994 and several fields of study became gender neutral, including law, dentistry and political science. (*Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, Canada, 1997)

- Women increased their ranks in engineering and applied sciences in degrees granted from 16% in 1993 to 21% in 1997.

- Just 1.6% of apprentices registered in 15 predominant trades in 1997 were women. This was a slight increase from 1.2% of 1992 (and 0.6% in 1998).

- In 1997, 31.4% of women with jobs, or 1.9 million employed women, participated in job-related education and training, compared with 27.65% of men with jobs, or 2 million employed men.

Around the World

- As many as 130 million children in the world today are not in school, 2/3 of them girls; 150 million children who enroll do not reach grade five. Girls continue to drop out, repeat or fail at higher rates than boys. (*State of the World's Children 1999*, UNICEF)

- At a global level, the proportion of girls enrolled in primary education, regardless of age, has steadily increased to the point that it almost equals the proportion of girls in the total school-age population. Despite the progress made in the absolute number of girls enrolled, the net enrollment ratios of girls remains lower than those of boys, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and North Africa, and South and West Asia. (*Education for All Statistical Document*, UNESCO, 2000)

- The number of illiterate adults fell from 895 million in 1990, to 880 million in 1998. In 1990, there were eight illiterate females for every ten males and this rate improved only slightly over the decade. (*Education for All Statistical Document*, UNESCO, 2000)

- The gender gap in literacy rates for people ages 15-24 everywhere but South Asia and Africa has been closed, with Sub-Saharan Africa seeing the greatest improvement in literacy rates for women in the 1990s increasing from 41% to 54%. (*Targets and Indicators: Selections from Progress of the World's Women*, UNIFEM, 2000)

Towards Equality

In Canada

- In Canada, responsibility for education rests primarily with the provincial governments. In the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, the Government of Canada has outlined a strategy, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, and women's organizations, to improve women's access to lifelong learning, supporting women's participation in the fields of science and technology, and developing appropriate training materials and programs for women.

- The Canadian Opportunities Strategy provides increased accessibility to post-secondary education for persons with dependents and those with disabilities.

- The Canada Study Grants program for female doctoral students provides grants of up to $3,000 per year for up to three years to help female students in Ph.D. programs where women are traditionally under-represented. The program also provides grants to students in financial need who have children.

- Under the Canada Student Loans Program, the needs assessment allows child care costs to be assessed for loans for both full- and part-time study.

- In 1996, federal and private sector funding supported the creation of five Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering at different Canadian universities across the country.

- The National Literary Secretariat supports projects which facilitate the involvement of women in literacy programs. For example, the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women received support to research the effects of abuse on literacy learners and is examining ways of creating more appropriate practices for abuse survivors.

- Following the 1998 Federal Budget, part-time students, many of whom are women, now qualify for child care expense deductions and education tax credits for the first time.

Around the World

- At the 1998 meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) held in Geneva, three indigenous women teachers from Canada, as members of Canada's official delegation, organized and hosted a workshop on indigenous education and training, with financial support from the Government of Canada. The Canadian workshop supported the designated theme of Education for the 1998 WGIP as one of the principal themes of the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People.

- Through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada supports a number of international education programs for women. For example:

  - in Bangladesh, an education project for adolescent girls helps prepare them to resist oppression and exploitation through instruction in basic literacy, numeracy and problem-solving, as well as providing income-generating skills, nurturing self-esteem and helping them exercising their human rights;

  - in Upper Egypt, girl-friendly schools — single-sex schools built by the community and staffed by women teachers recruited from the area — help reduce girls' illiteracy rates while also changing attitudes in the community about educating girls;

  - in Guyana, a basic teacher education training project is helping to upgrade the professional qualifications of primary level teachers, 80% of whom are women;

  - in Afghanistan, where girls are forbidden to go to school and women are not permitted to teach, a BBC radio project is providing basic education in literacy, numeracy, life skills (including information about landmines, found throughout the country) and civic responsibilities.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Institutional mechanisms or national machineries for the advancement of women are necessary to ensure women's needs and concerns are integrated into all programs and policies of governments at every level.
- There are Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women at federal, provincial, and territorial levels, supported by government mechanisms dedicated to advancing women's concerns. Many jurisdictions also have government-funded arm's-length advisory councils on women.
- The functions of these institutional mechanisms include policy analysis and development, research, public information, support to non-governmental organizations and designing tools for gender analysis.
- At the federal level, there is a central agency, a network of structures within departments and mechanisms to coordinate activities.

Around the World

- Nearly 75% of UN Member States have established some form of machinery for the advancement of women, with some machineries located in government, others located in civil society and still others in a mixture of the two.
- The Beijing Platform for Action stresses the importance of national machineries and the need for all parts of government and international organizations to mainstream a gender equality perspective into their work.
- Mainstreaming involves creating the structure, processes and training necessary to analyse and design policies and programs that are effective for women and men, girls and boys.
- Absence of national machineries in some countries, and low staffing and low resources in existing machineries, continues to inhibit women's progress, and limits the abilities of these machineries to reach out to regional and local levels.

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its landmark report on women's equality in 1970, Canada has developed and maintained a multi-level national machinery for promoting the advancement of women.
- Canada has had a federal Minister responsible for the Status of Women since 1971. The Minister acts as an advocate within Cabinet to ensure women's concerns are an integral part of government decision-making.
- Status of Women Canada (SWC), created in 1976, reports to the Minister and is the federal government department dedicated to women's equality. It is responsible for policy co-ordination, research, public information, funding and technical assistance related to the promotion of women's equality. SWC assumed funding, research and additional public information responsibilities in 1995.
- The Women's Program, created in 1973 and made part of SWC in 1995, is the primary source of financial and technical assistance to women's and other equality-seeking organizations working to advance gender equality. From 1995 to 2000, the Program provided core and project funding to over 1,500 initiatives at a

cost of $43 million. The national, regional, and local equality-seeking groups that are funded deal with a wide range of issues within the areas of economic equality, social justice, and access and participation issues for women.

- Other federal structures related to women's equality include: the Women's Bureau of Human Resources Development Canada established in 1954; the Farm Women's Bureau of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada established in 1981; the Women's Health Bureau of Health Canada; the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women's Equality section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; and the Gender Equality Division of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

- Since 1995, new units have been created: Justice Canada's Gender Equality Initiative; the Office of the Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues and Gender Equality, established by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; the Women's Bureau at Industry Canada and the gender based analysis unit in Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

- In 1995, Canada adopted the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality* that includes a policy requiring all federal government departments and agencies to carry out gender-based analysis (GBA) on future legislation and policies, where appropriate. GBA considers the impact of decision-making on both women and men, and is an important tool for effective economic and social planning.

- Statistics Canada is also a key partner in Canada's machinery. Through close cooperation over many years, Canada continues to develop its highly comprehensive body of statistics and indicators to support GBA.

- Within the Government of Canada, SWC leads the process of implementing the 1995 gender-based analysis policy. In 1999, SWC created a small GBA directorate to increase the understanding and the use of the federal policy of GBA as well as to enhance departments' use of GBA through capacity building.

Around the World

- Seventy-seven national action plans (90 %) include a specific section related to institutional mechanisms, or make explicit reference to creating and strengthening financial machineries and other government bodies, the integration of gender perspectives in legislation, public policy, programs and projects, and/or the generation and dissemination of sex disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

- Delegations from many countries continue to visit Canada to study models for integrating the concerns of girls and women in public policy.

- Support for national machineries for the advancement of women in developing countries has been an integral part of Canada's international development assistance initiatives for gender equality. For example, support from CIDA has helped national governments strengthen machineries and participate in international conferences such as the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

- Canada is also a strong contributor on gender issues to many international initiatives and organizations. Essential to these efforts is promoting the integration of a gender perspective into the work of international and regional fora including, for example, the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), la Francophonie, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth.

- CIDA assistance to the Government of Bangladesh led to the formation of a high-level National Council for Women and Development headed by the Prime Minister, and today a 96-member network of focal points is currently being coordinated by the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs. Other projects include:

    - technical assistance to the Kenyan Women's Bureau and a group of civil society organizations for the development of a National Policy Paper. The project also provided strategic support to the Bureau to work

with the Ministries of Finance and Planning to establish processes for engendering the national budget and sector development plans; and

- providing the Indonesian Ministry of State for the Role of Women with learning opportunities such as study tours, gender training, research and technical assistance.

Status of Women

Beijing+5

United Nations General Assembly Special Session

Women and Health

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Good health — physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being at all stages of life — is key to women's equality. Conversely, gender equality is a necessary condition to achieving good health.

- Women are the most frequent users of health care for many reasons, including: reproductive issues; role as primary steward of family health; longer lifespan; and higher incidence of chronic and degenerative disease, such as osteoporosis, in the later years.

- Women also represent the majority of health care providers at home, in the community and on the job. They are under-represented in decision-making and in higher-paid health care occupations while being overly represented in unpaid caregiving.

- In research, males continue to be used most often as the norm however, progress is being made in recognizing the need for both women-centred and gender-sensitive research and the need to also take into account how social, economic and cultural circumstances determine women's health.

- The health care sector must be encouraged to respond more effectively to woman abuse as a serious health issue.

Around The World

- The Beijing Platform for Action stresses that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Women's enjoyment of this right is vital to women's lives and well being and their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life.

- Women's health is seriously affected by the quality of, and control over, their reproductive health, including family planning, prenatal and maternal care, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

- Women's health is adversely affected by inequality, including such factors as "son preference", a situation where girls are not as well fed, cared for or educated as their brothers.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

Facts and figures are from Statistics Canada, unless otherwise noted

- In 1996, the average life expectancy was 81.4 years for women in Canada and 75.7 years for men. While women live longer than men do, they also suffer more from chronic diseases and disabilities.

- Life expectancy is significantly lower among Aboriginal women than among the overall Canadian female population. For instance, by 2005, life expectancy for Registered Indian females is only expected to increase to 77.5 years. Aboriginal women also have higher rates of disease such as diabetes, reproductive tract and breast cancers and HIV/AIDS than the general Canadian female population.

- In 1997-98, only 12% of health research funding (Medical Research Council) in Canada was spent specifically on women's health issues. (*CIHR 2000: Sex, Gender and Women's Health*, BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, 1999)

- Between 1985 and 1996-97, the proportion of Canadian women who had a Pap smear test within the

previous three years increased; in 1996-97, 87% of women age 18 and older reported having had a Pap smear test at some point in their lives.

- Fewer females (26%) than males (31%) were daily smokers, although the rate of smoking among young women aged 12-14 (10%) and 15-17 (29%) is substantially higher than young men of the same age (6% and 22%) respectively. (1996-1997)

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading killer of women in Canada — 38.2 % of female deaths is attributable to cardiovascular disease, a total of 39,614 women in 1997.

- Cancers of all kinds are the second leading killer — 27,148 deaths in 1997 (*Canadian Cancer Statistics 2000*, National Cancer Institute of Canada), with lung cancer overtaking breast cancer as the leading cancer killer among women. While the incidence of breast cancer continues to increase steadily, the mortality rate has decreased since 1980 and is now constant.

- Prior to 1995, adult women comprised only 6% of all adult cases of diagnosed AIDS; in 1997 this percentage had risen to 13%.

Around the World

- Maternal mortality represents the single greatest disparity in health between women in industrialized and developing countries. Nearly 600,000 women die each year of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth — the equivalent of three 747 plane crashes a day.

- Every year, about 100,000 women die as a result of unsafe illegal abortions.

- Worldwide, the population is aging, and women 80 years of age and older outnumber men by a factor of 2.5 to 1 in Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia and Southern Africa (*Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2000*, UN). In some population groups and in some countries however, it is the youth population that remains high or is growing.

- The proportion of women who are HIV positive is increasing. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 12-13 women are HIV positive for every 10 infected men; girls 15-19 are at least 5 times more likely to be HIV positive than boys of the same age. (*Global Summary of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, Dec. 99)

- Among adults aged 15-44, one third of worldwide disease is illness exclusive to women, such as cervical cancer, or illness predominant among women such as breast cancer, osteoarthritis or anemia.

- By 2025, lung cancer caused by smoking is expected to become the leading cause of death among women. (*World Health Report 1000*, WHO)

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Increased attention (funding, research, treatment and public discussion) is being paid to women's health issues in areas such as cancer, tobacco use, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, mental health and wellness, chronic diseases, prescription drug use, disease prevention and health promotion.

- The Government of Canada is currently working with gender equality experts to develop specialized gender-based analysis tools and training materials for the health sector. As Chair of a Commonwealth Working Group on Gender Equality and Health Indicators, Canada has begun developing a conceptual framework for a system of gender equality and health indicators.

- In 1996, the Government of Canada established five regional research Centres of Excellence for Women's Health to inform the policy process and narrow the knowledge gap on the impact of health determinants on women's health; they operate as partnerships among academics, community-based organizations and policy makers. As part of the Program, the Canadian Women's Health Network is funded to disseminate information on women's health, including new knowledge generated by the Centres, and to foster critical debate.

- In 1996, Canada adopted a new policy stipulating that manufacturers applying for market approval of pharmaceuticals had to include women in their clinical trials in the same proportion as they are likely to use the drug.

- In June 1998, the Government of Canada announced the renewal of the Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative with stable ongoing funding of $7 million per year.

- In response to the commitments made in the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, in 1999 the Government of Canada released *Health Canada's Women's Health Strategy* — a framework to address biases and inequities within its health department.

- The Government of Canada is addressing health inequalities in Aboriginal communities through programs and initiatives such as, the Aboriginal Head Start Program, the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, the Aboriginal Round Table on Sexual and Reproductive Health, and the First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program.

- In 1997, the federal government reinforced its commitment to reduce family violence in Canada through the Family Violence Initiative that coordinates the work of several government departments. The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence maintains an inventory of resources to address violence as a health issue.

Around the World

- The First International Conference on Women, Heart Disease and Stroke was held in Victoria, British Columbia in May 2000 to increase awareness of the problem of heart disease and stroke in women. The Conference also highlighted current scientific advances, gaps in knowledge and research opportunities for cardiovascular disease in women. A Declaration on Women's Heart Health was released at the Conference.

- At the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in Geneva in July 1997, Canadian indigenous health experts hosted a joint Canada/World Health Organization workshop on substance abuse and healing, at which indigenous women played a major role in focusing on their special health concerns. This workshop was organized with financial and policy support from Canada and supported the designated theme of Health for the 1997 WGIP, as one of the principal themes of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

- As part of Canadian preparations for the UN General Assembly Special Session in June 1999 to review the International Conference on Population and Development/Program of Action (ICPD+5), the Government of Canada provided financial and policy support for a separate consultative seminar on indigenous women's reproductive health. The seminar was a collaboration of a Canadian NGO, and other front-line providers of health services on- and off-reserve as well as several Canadian government departments.

- Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canada supports a number of projects around the world such as:

  - the Pan-American Health Organization's Perinatal Health Care Project, which is strengthening local capacity to deliver health care to mothers and their children in several countries in South and Central America;

  - micronutrient programming in Vitamin A, providing capsules and food fortification that prevents infections and contributes to maternal health, and in iodization of salt which prevents birth defects and mental deficiency;

  - a community health project in Brazil that addresses women as providers and as consumers of health care, through training in preventive child health, reproductive health, family planning, breastfeeding, sanitation and hygiene, traditional medicine and nutrition;

  - public information campaigns on the hazards of female genital mutilation (FGM) conducted by the InterAfrican Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children in Africa;

  - education and training for southern African organizations fighting AIDS, by using peer education, where women's and youth groups play a major role, theatre, song, slogans and humour to raise awareness.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Canada recognizes that women may face multiple forms of discrimination, which prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights. Canada is committed to equality for women in all spheres of Canadian society.

- Canada maintains that progress on women's rights around the world is central to progress on overall human rights and to democratic development.

Around the World

- Women are entitled to equal rights with men as a matter of social justice and in accordance with internationally agreed universal values, including those enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)* and the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)*.

- Despite legislation and the existence of national machineries in most countries, there is still a gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality between women and men.

Facts and Figures

- The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA), adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) confirmed that "the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" and called for action to integrate the equal status and human rights of women in the mainstream of UN system-wide activity. The World Conference of Women (1995) reaffirmed the universality of women's human rights and the obligations of governments to promote and protect all human rights of women.

- Although the goal of universal ratification of CEDAW by the year 2000 has not yet been achieved, it is the second most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world, ratified by 165 state parties. Despite the number of states who have ratified this important instrument, many state parties have taken numerous reservations to the CEDAW, particularly in relation to marriage and family law, citizenship and nationality rights and commitment to eliminate discrimination, which hinder the full realization of women's human rights in these countries.

- The Optional Protocol to CEDAW, adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 1999, creates an individual complaints mechanism and an inquiry procedure to the CEDAW. By ratifying the Optional Protocol, states would recognize the competence of the CEDAW Committee — the body that monitors states parties' compliance with the Convention — to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction once domestic remedies had been exhausted.

- At its 68th Session (April 2000), the United Nations Human Rights Committee adopted General Comment No. 28, Equality of Rights Between Men and Women. This Comment informs the Committee's interpretation of Article 3 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which guarantees the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of their civil and political rights provided for in the Covenant.

Towards Equality

In Canada

- *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), is part of Canada's Constitution and guarantees *all* Canadians equal protection and equal benefit of the law "without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical

disability". Court decisions have also expanded this list to prohibit discrimination on other grounds such as citizenship, marital status, and sexual orientation.

- The Court Challenges Program of Canada is a distinctive Canadian achievement in the area of human rights, providing funding to disadvantaged groups and individuals to put forward selected test cases of national significance on language rights and equality rights as guaranteed in Canada's Constitution including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

- Women in Canada have used the *Charter*, often supported by progressive decisions from the Supreme Court of Canada on equality rights, to challenge existing legislation in a number of areas including adverse effect discrimination, equal pay, employment opportunity, family law, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, pregnancy discrimination, fair pensions, and violence against women.

- Various legislative changes have increased accessibility to the justice system for persons with disabilities. For example, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* now includes a duty for employers to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities. The *Canadian Criminal Code* has been modified to make jury service possible for persons with disabilities, to allow persons with physical or mental disabilities to provide testimony through videotape, and to establish the offence of sexual exploitation of persons with disabilities.

- Many recent court decisions have found that the state cannot limit benefits or obligations to opposite-sex common-law couples. As a result, the federal government recently introduced an omnibus Bill (*The Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*) amending 68 federal statutes to extend benefits and obligations to same-sex couples.

- The Government of Canada has appointed a Special Representative on Protecting First Nation's Women's Rights with a wide-ranging mandate to make recommendations on the protection of rights for First Nations women both under the Indian Act and outside of it.

Around the World

- Canada continues to promote the human rights of women in international fora including the United Nations, la Francophonie, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth and the Organization of American States (OAS).

- In partnership with a Canadian human rights non-governmental organization, Canada has produced an annual report on the UN human rights system, called *For the Record: The United Nations Human Rights System*. The report condenses UN documents relating to human rights and organizes them into country-specific and thematic sections. Consideration of women's human rights by the UN is summarized in both sections. The thematic section on women's human rights includes summaries of the work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (SRVAW), the women-specific resolution of the CHR and General Assembly, and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) activities. The country-specific sections include elements of the reports of the UN mechanisms and bodies relating to women's human rights.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supports a number of international projects promoting the human rights of women and girls, such as:

  - gender awareness training for judges, lawyers and legal activists in South Asia to ensure that women's rights are observed throughout the judicial process, particularly where women are victims of violence.

  - a democratic development project in El Salvador that supported women's participation in developing new electoral laws and greater awareness of women's political and civil rights.

  - a local network in Senegal, Siggil Jigeen, successfully advocating for legislative change and to promote women's human rights. This funding led to the national assembly adopting legislation against female genital mutilation. Similarly, in Kenya, CIDA funding helped women's groups lobby successfully for a Member of Parliament to put forward a private member's bill on affirmative action.

- mobile legal aid and education clinics serving rural women in a number of francophone African countries, through *la Francophonie*, an association of French-speaking nations.

- CIDA has long supported international women's rights organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, the Law and Development, Women in Law and Development in Africa, and the Comite Latinamericano para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Violence against women is an important equality issue with serious economic, health and social consequences for individuals, families and society.
- Violence against women is both a cause and consequence of women's inequality and a violation of women's human rights.
- Women's organizations in Canada have been the catalyst for "breaking the silence" on violence against women. From the grassroots to the national level, they continue to play an instrumental role in efforts to eliminate violence against women.

Around the World

- Violence against women is a world-wide problem, affecting millions of women daily, cutting across national borders, race, class, ethnic, religious lines, educational and income levels.
- Research suggests that gender-based violence is a learned behaviour, linked to male power, privilege and dominance in the family and society. The social structure which sustains and maintains gender inequalities such as the general acceptance by society of subordination of women to men, and the subordination of certain women to other women, or the socio-sexual roles of men and women driven by their religion, the media, and culture, contribute to perpetuating this way of thinking and acting.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

- In Canada, a 1997 study reported that women account for 88% of all spousal violence victims reported to a sample of 179 police agencies in Canada. (*Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 1999*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics)
- From 1978 to 1997, three times as many wives as husbands were killed by their spouse, with firearms, followed by knives, as the most frequent means of homicide, accounting for one in three cases. (*Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 1999*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics)
- Aboriginal women with status under the *Indian Act* and who are between the ages of 25 and 44 are five times more likely to experience a violent death than other Canadian women in the same age category. (*Aboriginal Women: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile*, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Summer 1996)
- In 1997, sexual offences accounted for 10% of the total number of police-reported violent offences compared with 13% in 1993. Sexual offences represented only 1% of the total number of criminal offences reported to police, however police statistics probably represent only a small portion of all sexual offences and offenders, since results from victimization surveys suggest that as many as 90% of all sexual offences are not reported to the police. (*The Daily*, Statistics Canada, March 29, 1999)
- 413 shelters for battered women that responded to a survey question indicated that 90,792 women and dependent children had been admitted between April 1, 1997 and March 31, 1998. (*Canada's Shelters for Abused Women*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1999)

- On April 20, 1998, there were 470 shelters for abused women across Canada. Of these, only 18 shelters existed prior to 1975, while 57 shelters began operations between 1975 and 1979. (*Canada's Shelters for Abused Women*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1999)

- The partial estimated annual costs of violence against women in the selected four policy areas of social services/education, criminal justice, labour/employment and health/medical is over $4.2 billion. (*Selected Estimates of Costs of Violence Against Women*, Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, 1995)

Around the World

- Violence against women is a pervasive violation of human rights in the world today. The UN estimates that 1/4 of the world's women are severely abused at home. Battery is the leading cause of injury in the world among women aged 15-44 years.

- Each year, at least two million girls experience genital mutilation as dictated by custom. That's 6,000 cases a day, five girls every minute. (*Violence against Women*, Focus on Women, UN, 1995)

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, the regions with the highest reported rates of domestic violence, 30% to 60% of women are affected by violence; in some countries, 30% of all hospitalizations are caused by domestic violence. Estimated costs of domestic violence to the economy range from 1.6% to 2% of GNP. (*Special Report on Violence*, InterAmerican Development Bank, 1997)

Towards Equality

In Canada

- On December 6, 1998, the Canadian Ministers Responsible for Status of Women issued their *Iqaluit Declaration on Violence Against Women* as a statement of their commitment to end violence against women.

- The result of the 1999 General Social Survey by Statistics Canada will include a detailed analysis of violence by current and previous spouses, including the nature and extent of violence in marital and common-law relationships, risk factors associated with spousal violence, the severity of the violence (injury, impact of the incident), whether the violence was reported to the police, and the use of medical and social support services.

- Pioneering Canadian legislation includes:

  - Bill C-72 (self-induced intoxication) clarified the criminal law to indicate that intoxication is not a defence to any general intent crimes of violence such as sexual assault and assault (1995);

  - Bill C-41 (sentencing) included amendments to the sentencing provisions which provide that abusing a spouse or child or a position of trust or authority in committing an offence will be considered an aggravating factor for the purposes of sentencing the offender (1995);

  - Bill C-68 (*Firearms Act*) included a national registration system for all firearms and provisions for licensing (1995);

  - Bill C-27 (child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and female genital mutilation) included provisions to facilitate the testimony of young victims and witnesses of sexual exploitation. In addition, the legislation allows for prosecution of Canadians who travel abroad and sexually exploit children, strengthens penalties against those who exploit juvenile prostitutes and those who kill the victims they have stalked, and clarifies that the practice of female genital mutilation is an offence. The Bill also criminalizes stalking or criminal harassment (1997);

  - Bill C-46 (production of records in sexual offence proceedings) protects sexual offence victims by restricting the production of personal information records such as psychiatric, therapeutic and counselling records (1997);

  - Bill C-79 (Victims of Crime) included amendments to ensure victim safety is considered in all bail decisions, to expand provisions to facilitate the participation of victims, to permit publication bans on the identity of any victim or witness, to enhance the victim impact statement provisions and to revise

surcharge imposed on offenders to increase provincial and territorial revenues, allowing these levels of government to improve services currently provided to victims (1999).

- The 1997 renewed Family Violence Initiative supports and complements activities across 13 federal government departments and three agencies. The Initiative addresses violence in the family, primarily as it relates to women and their children.

- Health Canada co-ordinates the Initiative and operates the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence on behalf of all participating departments, to conduct research, to develop informational resources, to manage the family violence issue horizontally and coordinate federal activities.

Around the World

- Canada initiated the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) adopted by the UN in 1993.

- Canada was instrumental in creating the position of UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women in 1994. The Special Rapporteur was appointed to seek and receive information on violence against women, to recommend measures to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequence. The Special Rapporteur is currently in her third term and support for this Canadian-led Commission on Human Rights (CHR) initiative has increased with over 70 co-sponsors from all regional groups.

- Canada actively participated in the workshop on Women in the Criminal Justice System at the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in April 2000. Canada's Justice Minister spoke on the need for international cooperation to combat violence against women. Other Canadian presentations included enhancing survey research on violence against women and implementing international standards to eliminate violence against women.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funds projects around the world to end violence against women. For example,

  - women's organizations and community self-help groups working with female survivors of domestic violence in Central America, and in Costa Rica, a program on violence in the schools is directed specifically at girls.

  - legal literacy programs for women affected by violence in a number of countries, including legal clinics in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

  - public awareness programs not only about domestic violence but also about trafficking, in countries such as Nepal, Thailand and Bangladesh.

  - awareness training and advocacy on violence against women who work overseas. A conference in the Philippines on reintegrating women survivors of workplace violence overseas resulted in recommendations to strengthen existing government programs and services.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

The Big Picture

In Canada

- The equitable participation of women in the media, including access to and control of new information and communications technologies (ICTs), and fair portrayal of the diverse lives of women are major issues.
- More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy.
- The portrayal of women in the media does not reflect the diverse lives and changing place of women in Canadian society; women's voices are heard less often, their roles are limited, stereotyping is common and issues and perspectives important to women are marginalized. Portrayal of violence and sexual objectification remains a concern.
- Women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are almost invisible as either reporters or sources in newscasts.

Around the World

- New opportunities for the participation of women in the media and for the dissemination of information about women have been created as a result of the "revolution" in the field of communications. Despite these new developments, progress in removing stereotypes and negative images of women in the media has been slow.
- ICTs and broadcasting media have become important tools for women to communicate gender equality messages and mobilize for advocacy and social change worldwide.
- Sexist and exclusionary messages, especially those related to violence or to trivialization of women's concerns, still prevail in all media worldwide and tend to reinforce discrimination and perpetuate women's lower status in society.
- Although there has been some modest progress, women's access to both expression and decision-making in all media, and especially new media, is less than men's, and poor women have least access of all.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

- A recent study conducted by the National Watch on Images of Women in Canada (MediaWatch) found that although women represent more than 50% of the population, their representation as newsmakers, reporters or news photographers hovers around 20%. (*Women Strike Out*, 1998)
- Although female students make up more that 50% of all journalism school graduates, recent studies demonstrate that women write only 30% of the by-lines in newspapers. Female editors are even more rare. (MediaWatch, 1999)
- Family responsibilities are the biggest determining factor in female participation in newsroom jobs: 65% of women journalists are married versus 81% of men. Two thirds of the women are childless compared to 1/3 of the men. Only 14% of women have two or more children compared to 50% of the men. (Drs. Gertrude Robinson and Armande Saint-Jean in *How far have women come in journalism*, Media Magazine, Spring 1999)
- Research studies report negative effects on women exposed to media images of the "ideal" woman. (National Eating Disorder Information Centre, February 2000)

- On an average day in 1998, 49% of all women aged 15 and over used a computer, compared to 63% of young men. However, young women are about as likely as their male counterparts to use a computer. (Statistics Canada General Social Survey)

- 7.6 million Canadian adults use the World Wide Web every week; 42% are women (*Media Digest*, 1999-2000, Media Director's Council).

Around the World

- Women's use of the Internet, especially e-mail, has more than quintupled since 1995. (*Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, UN, 2000)*

- In countries where access to computers is available, increasing numbers of women have gained access to computer technology and the Internet. From 1995 to 1998, women's online engagements were estimated to have increased from 8.1 million to 30.1 million globally, and were expected to reach 43.3 million in 2000. (*Women and the Media fact sheet*, UN Department of Public Information, 2000)

- There has been immense growth in networks formed specifically to advance gender equality through the media by fostering greater participation by women and by monitoring content, including the International Women's Media Foundation and the Asian Women's Resource Exchange.

- Women continue to cluster in lower-paid, low-status jobs in the media, and in journalism, they continue to concentrate in the "soft" issues rather than "hard" issues like politics and economics.

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Progress on women's equality in the media is being made through a mix of legislation, regulation, advocacy inside and outside the industry, industry self-improvement, changes in public expectations, voluntary guidelines, education and training.

- The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has developed and endorses, *Gender Guidelines*, a document which ensures language used by on-air personnel treats men and women equally. (CBC, December 1998)

- The Government of Canada, in partnership with the media industry and community, has initiated a federal Media Violence Strategy. The long-term goals of the Strategy are: to reduce media violence; to use media as a positive force to foster long-term attitudinal and behavioural change towards societal violence, by reducing the public's tolerance of aggressive, racist and sexist behaviour; and to promote media education for all viewers.

- MediaWatch is a federally and privately funded national, women's organization dedicated to eliminating sexism in the media. Known for its unique work nationally as well as internationally, MediaWatch regularly monitors media; conducts research and surveys; promotes consumer advocacy; and presents concerns to media organizations, advertisers, regulatory bodies and government.

- The Media Awareness Network promotes and supports media education in Canadian schools, homes and communities through Internet. The Network encourages critical thinking about media information, media entertainment and new communication technologies using a gender-based analysis.

- Other organizations active in promoting women's equality in the media include ACTRA, Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ), Women in Film and Television-Toronto (WIFT-T), Femmes du cinéma, de la télévision et de la vidéo à Montréal, and Canadian Women in Communications (CWC).

Around the World

- CIDA has funded a number of projects using the media to promote human rights, such as:

  - a radio series in Pakistan on marriage, contracts, divorce and family law, together with the establishment of women's listening centres in Karachi where community-based organizations facilitate and assist during the broadcasts.

  - the International Telecommunications Union's Task Force on Gender Issues, which promotes

mainstreaming of gender issues into telecom policy and programs and ensures that benefits apply equally to women and men.

- a survey of the social and gender impacts of the introduction of IT on women in Vietnam, especially on the labour market; findings were presented to decision-makers and are being integrated into policies.

- media monitoring, training of journalists and media policymakers, and educational workshops linking violence in the media and gender violence in society, by Women's Media Watch — Jamaica.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Canada is concerned about the profound impact of military, political and social conflict around the world on civilian women and children, especially gender-based violence.
- Women play an important role in creating peaceful societies and in finding alternatives to conflict. To play a full and equal part in securing and maintaining peace, women must be politically and economically empowered and represented at all levels of decision-making.

Around the World

- War and armed conflict impact differently on women and men. While men account for the largest number of combatants, women and children are disproportionately represented among civilians affected by conflict. Women are subject to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, such as rape, forced marriage and forced pregnancy by opposing forces.
- Women and children also constitute the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world.
- During armed conflict and the collapse of communities, women play a critical role in working to preserve social order.
- In many countries, expenditures on armaments, military equipment and armed conflict mean fewer resources for social spending, which disproportionately affect women and children.
- Canada played a strong role in establishing the International Criminal Court, which recognizes gender as a basis for persecution and includes rape, enforced prostitution and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Women are not only victims and survivors of wars, they also play a key role in both community reconciliation and reconstruction. This role is receiving more recognition and support from international aid agencies and national governments.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

- Since 1993 when the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) Guidelines recognizing gender-based persecution were introduced, 1,770 gender-related crimes were finalized, 954 (54%) were accepted, 556 (31%) were rejected and 260 (15%) were withdrawn, abandoned, discontinued or otherwise finalized.
- During the same period, the IRB dealt with approximately 157,000 refugee claims. Over 1/3 were women, with most basing their claims on grounds other than gender.

Around the World

- About 250,000 children, many of them girls are seized by various armies to serve as soldiers or sex slaves. (*State of the World's Children Report 2000*, UNICEF)
- Women and children make up approximately 80% of the world's 25.5 million refugees and 26 million displaced persons.

- A European Community fact-finding team estimated that more than 20,000 Muslim women were raped in Bosnia in 1992, and in Rwanda, an estimated 15,000 women were raped in one year.

- The Carnegie Foundation estimates that for every soldier killed in the last 15 years, 9 civilians died, the majority of whom were women and children

Towards Equality

In Canada

- In January 2000, Canada launched the *Urgent Protection pilot project* which allows for expedited resettlement in Canada of refugees who are in need of urgent protection because their life, liberty or physical well-being is under immediate credible threat. This pilot is a one year project and is not gender-specific.

- In April 1998, in cooperation with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Canada hosted an international workshop on its *Women at Risk Program*. The conference examined new challenges facing governments and NGOs in the delivery of programs designed to protect refugee women in perilous situations, to identify new and effective approaches. Steps taken to improve the program include gender-sensitivity training for visa officers.

- In Canada, gay men and lesbian women have been found to be members of a "particular social group" in the meaning of the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*.

- In April 2000, the Government of Canada tabled a new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* which contains provisions to expand the definition of spouse to include common-law and same-sex partners.

Around the World

- In partnership with the UK, Canada is developing a Gender Awareness Training Initiative for Civilian and Military Participants in Peace Operations. The training curriculum aims to enhance awareness of the gender dimensions of peace operations, and provide participants with the ability to employ gender analysis when in the field, by providing concrete skills and tools.

- Canada has been very active in promoting women's involvement in peace-building activities and has consistently raised issues associated with the impact of conflict on women within the UN Security Council thematic and geographic discussions.

- Canada was instrumental in ensuring the successful inclusion of a detailed list of gender-based crimes in the International Criminal Court Statute, ensuring that staff and judges with expertise in violence against women will be included in the Court and that women would be fairly represented among the judiciary and staff. Legislation has been tabled in the House of Commons that will allow Canada to be among the first to ratify the International Criminal Court Statute.

- Canada has taken an active leadership role in supporting the international campaign to bring about a ban on anti-personnel mines. Canada was the first country to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the use, Stockpiling, Production and transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

- Canadian mine action programming ensures no barriers exist for the participation of women or girls in mine awareness education, that there is no gender discrimination in the provision of trauma care, rehabilitation and reintegration services for mine victims. The programming also ensures the opportunity for women to participate in the programming and decision-making of organizations and initiatives, as community leaders, caregivers and educators/trainers, that address demining, mine awareness and victim assistance.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supports a number of projects related to gender and peace building:

a training program for 60 Arab and Jewish women to enhance their understanding of key issues and women's role in resolving them.

- in Burundi, training sessions on conflict resolution techniques are offered for civil society groups, including women's groups.

- in Sierra Leone, CIDA's Democratic Development Fund has provided skills training for ex-combatants, including women, and education on human rights, the peace accords and non-violent conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Status of Women

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Big Picture

In Canada

Canada is committed to a coherent approach to economic, social, environmental and foreign policies. Sustainable development is the key objective of integrating social, economic and environmental goals.

Canada is committed to including women's perspectives on achieving sustainable development.

Canada recognizes the special relationship of Aboriginal peoples with the environment.

Around the World

Women in the developing world are the daily caretakers of the living environment, depending on its renewable resources to provide the basic necessities of food, water and shelter. For them, physical survival and environmental sustainability are one.

Agenda 21, adopted at the UN World Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio (1992), recognized the critical role of women in achieving sustainable development. The results of UNCED and its five year review, as well as other world conferences such as those on Population and Development (Cairo 1994), on Women (Beijing 1995) and on Human settlements (Istanbul) reflect an evolving understanding of the inter-linkages between women, environment, population and sustainable development.

As childbearers and primary caretakers of health, women are affected by adverse health impacts of environmental degradation and pollution.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

Canadians are the heaviest users per capita of electricity in the world; we are also one of the most wasteful people, generating 2.2 kg of garbage each day. (Environmentally Sound Packaging Coalition, *Women and the Environment*, Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues, 1990)

A recent poll shows that women (23%) are more inclined than men (16%) to believe that their health is currently affected "a great deal " by environmental problems. The poll also found that women are more likely (55%) than men (45%) to believe the health of future generations will be affected "a great deal" by environmental problems. (The Environmental Monitor, 1996)

Canadians use 1.7 billion disposable diapers each year accounting for approximately 2.5% of all municipal solid waste going to landfill. The manufacture of disposable diapers in Canada consumes approximately 65 tonnes of pulp, 8,800 tonnes of plastic and 9,800 tonnes of packing material.

Breast Cancer and the Environment: The Chlorine Connection, a 1992 Greenpeace report, is part of growing documentation that chlorine-based compounds (used in plastic, pesticides, bleaching) are a significant factor in causing breast cancer.

Around the World

In developing countries, women are the primary collectors and managers of wood fuel, non-wood forest resources and water; the main producers of subsistence food crops and the primary users of communal lands and forests.

- As forests disappear, women must walk further to collect wood and biomass for fuel. In the Himalayas, it takes a woman a full day to gather wood, compared to two hours only a generation ago. Similarly, water contamination and diversion are increasing women's search for water sources, and women may spend up to 4 hours a day retrieving water, often carrying 20 kg or more in containers.

- Local and indigenous knowledge of natural resource management practices is playing a greater role in environmental sustainability, and women are key repositories of this knowledge.

- Women's organizations and networks play an increasingly important role in advocacy and in specific actions to improve the environment.

- Global results of 27,000 people surveyed across 25 countries indicate that women (41%) are more inclined than men (37%) to believe that their health is currently affected "a great deal" by environmental problems. The Survey also found that women are more likely (59%) than men (54%) to believe the health of future generations will be affected "a great deal" by environmental problems. (The International Environmental Monitor, 1999)

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Canada strongly supported the 1992 UN Earth Summit decision that women's contributions to and concerns about the environment be treated both as a separate issue and integrated throughout the Summit document. Agenda 21 devoted a separate chapter to women, the result of advocacy by women's groups, supported by Canada and other concerned governments.

- Part of Canada's Women's Health Strategy is the reduction of environmental hazards that threaten women's health. Under this strategy, Canada will accelerate screening and assessment of new and existing substances, improve management and control of toxic substances and track progress.

- Many groups in Canada are concerned with the issue of women and the environment, including Women for a Just and Healthy Planet and Friends of the Earth.

- In 1998, Dalhousie University announced the creation of the Elizabeth May Chair in Women's Health and Environment. The mandate of the Chair is to advance knowledge, promote debate and ensure research results become integrated into public policy in the areas of women's health and the environment.

- The 9th International Women and Health meeting, to be held in Toronto in 2001, will include women's health and the environment as a theme, and will examine the environmental risks faced by women.

Around the World

- Canada promoted the integration of a gender perspective in the texts of international sustainable development agreements, including the review and assessment of the Rio Summit and recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Canada has proposed and supported texts that promote gender equality or the integration of a gender perspective in a number of areas of sustainable development, including all levels of decision-making, poverty alleviation, health, population, human settlements, capacity-building, science, education and awareness, information and tools for measuring progress.

- Canadian indigenous women have been fully active in Government of Canada efforts to meet commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Canada has provided financial and policy support for their participation at both the Canadian Open-ender Working Group on the Biodiversity Convention and at international meetings, such as the Fourth World Conference of the parties and the Madrid Workshop on the UN Biodiversity Convention/Traditional Knowledge. Canada recognizes that indigenous women are often key observers of environmental health and are sensitive to environmental change.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funds a number of international projects to mobilize women at the community level to sustainably manage the environment. For example:

- in Cote d'Ivoire, 100 women volunteers, elected by their peers, were trained in health, hygiene, environmental protection and creation of cooperatives. When they returned to their villages, they mobilized their neighbours to set up local hygiene committees, install more energy-efficient stoves and create waste pits and kitchen storage facilities.

- a women's organization in Gujurat, India, supported reclaims unproductive wasteland lost to salt damage by constructing a rainwater catchment system, planting saline-tolerant trees, constructing biogas plants and introducing smokeless stoves.

- initiatives to support women's role in managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment such as water supply projects in Sri Lanka, Peru, Honduras and Ghana, which incorporate training for women in hand pump use and maintenance, and water and sanitation practices; community forest projects in India which emphasize women's roles and participation; and agricultural programs in Africa which target women farmers.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

United Nations General Assembly
Special Session

Women and Economic Equality

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Total working time is similar for women and men. However, there is a distinct division of labour between the sexes. On average, women spend more of their time on unpaid work, especially when there are children, while men spend the majority of their time on paid work.

- On average, women's earnings and incomes are continuing to rise but they still tend to be lower than men's. Women are often in precarious jobs and sectors and also have less access to social security provisions and private benefit plans.

- Although the majority of women are employed and most have one full-time paid job, the number working in non-standard arrangements, including part-time, temporary, multiple jobs and self-employment, has grown over the past decade.

- As society ages, an emerging issue is the "sandwich generation" — parents looking after their own children and also caring for their own aging parents, further adding to the time crunch of Canadian women as these duties fall disproportionately on them.

- Among women, there are significant differences and thus progress has been uneven with some women even falling behind. Women who face barriers due to factors such as race, ethnicity, Aboriginal status, disability, marital breakdown or the experience of violence and abuse, often do not compare favourably to other women or to men within their population.

Around the World

- Representing over half the world's population, women are critical to the achievement of sustainable economic development. Women's participation in trade and investment as workers, entrepreneurs, consumers and investors contributes to the achievement of sustained economic growth.

- Over the past two decades, the number of women employed in the paid labour force has increased substantially. Globally, the increase in women's overall share of the labour force has been particularly marked in export-oriented sectors, where women comprise as much as 3/4 of the workforce. Moreover, women's contributions to the informal sector, and to the unpaid work of society constitute major contributions to the economy and economic growth.

- The gender effect of globalization is complex and its effects are mixed. Overall, globalization to date has done little to address gender inequalities over the long term. While in some circumstances it has reduced inequality with increased participation of women in the labour force, in other cases it has intensified them.

- There is also increasing need to examine the gender-dimension of international trade. This was raised during an Expert Workshop on Trade, Sustainable Development and Gender convened by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in July 1999. Moreover, women's organizations are advocating that the World Trade Organization (WTO), the primary trade regulator for the world's major trading nations, ensure that its policies reflect gender concerns.

- There is also increasing need for gender sensitive policies, for modernization of social security systems and for the engendering of economics to enable women to participate in the economy on an equal footing with men and to ensure that women's needs and priorities are included in national development.

Facts and Figures

Statistics and figures below are from Statistics Canada unless otherwise noted.

In Canada

- Women are now starting businesses at twice the rate of men, with women starting half of all new businesses. Women own 1/3 of small- and medium-sized businesses. In 1997, women created more jobs than Canada's top 100 companies.

- In 1998, women spent an average of 2.8 hours daily on paid work and 4.4. hours on unpaid work, whereas the situation for men was the reverse. Men spent 4.5 hours on paid work and 2.7 hours on unpaid work. In 1996, 15% of all women between the ages of 25-54 provided unpaid child care and care or assistance to a senior, in comparison to only 9% of men in this age range.

- Between 1986 and 1995, women's income from all sources compared to men's, rose 8 percentage points. By 1997, it was up to 61.8%. The male-female earnings ratio for full-year, full-time employment is higher at 72.5% but there has been little change in the past five years. Earnings are the majority of women's income but pensions, child support and other sources of income are more important to women than men. The tax system also had a positive effect on gender equality with women's after-tax income higher than before tax. (*Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, Canada, 1997)

- In 1999, women made up 45.7% of the overall workforce. The unemployment rate for women and men over 25 years is currently 5.6%; in 1993, the rate was 9.8% for women. The participation rate for women over 25 has increased to about 60% (compared to 74% for men) today from 46%, 20 years ago. Most employed women return to their jobs within six months of having a child.

- In 1999, 41% of employed women aged 15-64 had a non-standard employment arrangement (up from 35% in 1989) compared to 20% of men; 12.9% of women were self-employed (20.3% of men), compared to 9.9% of women in 1990 (17.4% of men).

- In 1999, women accounted for 52.1% of part-time workers aged 15-24 (men 37.6%), 27% of women aged 25-44 (men 4.5%), 22.1% of those 45-54 (men 4.3%) and 31.4% of those 55-64 (men 10.2%).

- In 1998, women accounted for 40% of regular Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries. However, women accounted for 98% of EI maternity/parental benefit recipients and 59% of those receiving sickness benefits. In contrast, women accounted for only 40% of those receiving self-employment assistance benefits, 38% of those receiving training benefits, 38% of those getting job-creation benefits and 34% of those involved in work-sharing arrangements.

- Canadian demographics are changing, with a more diverse population and varied family arrangements; the proportions of women who are lone parents are increasing, as are dual-income families, common-law relationships and women living alone. Difficulty in obtaining child support, access to pensions and ways to combine employment and family responsibilities continue to remain important issues for women.

Around the World

- Over the past twenty years, women have provided the bulk of new labour supply in developed and developing countries alike. In every region except Africa, the proportion of women in the labour force has grown substantially. (*World Employment Report* 1998-99: *Women And Training In The Global Economy*, ILO, 1998).

- Despite rapidly increasing rates of female education and participation in the workforce worldwide, most women continue to suffer from occupational segregation in the workplace and rarely break through the so-called "glass ceiling" separating them from top-level management and professional positions (*Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management*, ILO, 1997)

- Around the world, an increasing number of women are launching their own enterprises. National estimates indicate that 10% of the new enterprises in North Africa, 33% in North America and 40% in the former East Germany were created by women; the figure for the United States surpasses 60%. Women predictably face more difficulties than men when first entering business

or attempting to expand. *(World Employment Report 1998-99: Women and training in the global economy,* ILO, 1998)

- Although some countries have modified laws related to property rights and access to other productive assets, women still do not have equal access to the resources and benefits of development, including land, education and training and credit.

- Women around the world earn anywhere from 50-92 cents for every dollar a man earns (UNICEF, 1995)

- Despite the increase in jobs for women brought about by globalization, women still face discrimination, low wages, poor working conditions and high insecurity. (*Human Development Report 1999)*

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Under the *Employment Insurance Act*, parental benefits are available to both biological and adoptive parents. These benefits can be claimed by either parent or shared. As of December 31, 2000, parental benefits will be increased from 10 to 35 weeks in addition to 15 weeks of maternity benefits available for birth mothers.

- For families caring for children with severe difficulties, the 2000 federal budget provides additional tax assistance through a supplement to the Disability Tax Credit. This builds on other initiatives since Beijing such as the infirm dependent credit and caregiver credit which provide tax assistance for the care of low-income, infirm dependent adult relatives seniors. The medical expense tax credit has also been positive. It provides assistance including respite care and home modifications for those with severe mobility impairments.

- Over the past five years, a number of tax measures for families with children, have been introduced to improve the economic situation of Canadians and support gender equality. General tax reductions will assist women as low-income earners and increases to the Child Care Expense Deduction better enable parents, especially women, to meet their income and family care needs. The Canada Child Tax Benefit which provides income support to low- and middle-income families based on number of children, has been continuously enriched. The cheques go to the mother.

- The Canada Pension Plan has features that are particularly important to women such as the survivor benefit, the child-rearing drop-out provision, credit-splitting and full indexation. These features recognize that women's pattern of unpaid work, employment and remuneration is still very different from those of men.

- Also since Beijing, the Government of Canada introduced a child support reform package to improve fairness for children following separation and divorce. In includes guidelines for the setting of awards, enforcement measures and taxation changes. As women are the majority of custodial parents and may spend may years as lone parents, these changes are important to their economic well-being.

- In 1996, Canada's employment equity legislation was strengthened and expanded. Major pay equity adjustments have since been made to several categories of federal public service employees.

- In 1999, Canada also made a commitment to make workplace policies of federally regulated employees more family friendly.

- In 1997, Canadian Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women launched the Economic Gender Equality Indicators – the first gender-sensitive economic indicators.

- In 2001, the Canadian Census of Population questions on unpaid work, developed for the first time in 1996, will again be included. They focus on dependent care as a critical issue of public policy interest.

Around the World

- The Government of Canada works actively to support women business owners. In June 1998, Canada launched the Businesswomen in Trade web site, which allows women business owners to learn more about government services and how to export successfully. It also allows them to network on-line, learn about financing and insurance services, and locate foreign business opportunities.

- The Trade Research Coalition, under the direction of 20 Canadian businesswomen, academics and government representatives, launched a major research project in September 1998. The research surveyed 254 women business owners, and examined their export patterns and export service requirements. The results, contained in the document *Beyond Borders: Canadian Businesswomen in International Trade*, provided the main substance of the policy elements discussed at the Canada-U.S. Women's Trade Summit, which took place in 1999. The Summit involved 300 Canadian and American businesswomen within small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and provided participants with an opportunity to discuss trade impediments between the two countries, particularly as experienced by businesswomen and researched by the Trade Research Coalition; and allowed new deals to be formed though organized networking events.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supports a number of projects including:

  - a Structural Adjustment and Gender project in Africa bringing together African researchers, academics and government decision-makers to dialogue, research, share information and advocate on gender issues. They have contributed to the design of structural adjustment programs and worked to ensure that gender considerations are taken into account in all policies and programs implemented by national governments and donors;

  - Proshika Kendra, a local organization in Bangladesh that specifically targets the central role of the exploitation of women in perpetuating poverty. It provides training in that relationship for self-help groups as well as providing skills training and credit for microenterprise; and

  - Grupo Factor X in Mexico, a labour organization that established a women's centre offering health services, legal counselling on labour rights, and training to mobilize women activists to defend the rights of women workers in the maquiladoras and free trade zones.

Status of Women

Beijing +5

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION

THE GIRL CHILD

The Big Picture

In Canada

- Gender socialization shapes and limits the lives of girls, especially their education and career choices.

- Adolescent girls are vulnerable to stereotypical gender images that idealize being underweight, smoking and being submissive to men. They also face the risk of gender-based violence.

- The majority of girls in Canada believe in gender equality but they continue to be affected by systemic inequalities prevalent in society. Most girls don't recognize either the potential barriers they face, or the new opportunities that are available to them compared to other generations.

Around the World

- Progress has been made in improving the health, nutrition and education of children around the world. However, girls continue to be disadvantaged compared to boys and the specific needs and interests of girls are often not addressed in the development and implementation of policies and programs. Adolescent girls are particularly at risk and have specific needs in terms of their sexual and reproductive health and the development and implementation of their life skills and self-esteem.

- Since 1995, there has been a great deal of attention given to the issues of child labour and the commercial sexual exploitation of children including the First World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm in 1996 and the adoption of the *ILO Convention for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* in 1999.

- Increasing attention has been given to the situation of girls in a number of international fora such as at the World Summit for Children in 1990, through the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), International Conference on Population and Development (1994), and their subsequent reviews, as well as at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) where the girl child was identified as a critical area of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action.

- In developing countries, discrimination against girls results in higher mortality rates, malnutrition, unequal access to education, and a greater work burden of unpaid domestic chores and paid child labour.

- In addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has nearly achieved universal ratification, individual countries have passed legislation that protects the rights of girls, including laws on female genital mutilation (FGM), access to education and health, protection from sexual abuse and exploitation, and child labour.

Facts and Figures

In Canada

- A 1997 report by the Canadian Institute of Child Health entitled "The Canadian Girl-Child: Determinants of the Health and Well-being of Girls and Young Women" has stressed that "gender identity determines how boys and girls experience their environment and the life paths they choose".

- Girls and young women are making headway in the education system, with young women now more likely to have a university degree than young men. While women make up the majority in most fields of study, almost 7 out of 10 are in education (69%) and health-related programs (68%). In contrast, women account for only 29% of students in mathematics and 22% of those in engineering and applied sciences.

- Statistics show that over 80% of girls diet before age 18, with an alarming 40% of 9-year-old girls reporting dieting. (February 2000)

- In 1996-97, the rate of smoking among young women aged 12-14 years (10%) and 15-17 years (29%) was substantially higher than among young men the same age (6% and 22% respectively).

- In 1998, over half of female victims of sexual offences were less than 18 years of age; 32% were aged 12-17 and 21% were under age 12.

Around the World

- The International Labour Organization estimates that worldwide at least 250 million children under age 14 work part- or full-time; girls tend to concentrate in domestic service and are often victims of abuse and exploitation.

- Girl refugees are vulnerable to gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination in areas such as food distribution and access to health care services and education.

- Younger mothers aged 15-19 give birth to more than 16 million babies each year; pregnancy complications are the major cause of death in 15-19 year-olds worldwide, and maternal mortality rates for girls aged 10-14 is five times higher than that of 20-24 year-olds; nearly one quarter of the 585,000 women who die each year of causes related to childbirth are teenagers.

Towards Equality

In Canada

- Through income support programs, the federal government has taken measures to support early child development to enhance opportunities and improve the well-being of children. A key component of the National Children's Agenda is the National Child Benefit that aims to prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty. The federal contribution is an increase in the Canada Child Tax Benefit for low-income families, that allows provinces and territories to re-invest savings due to the federal increase in programs and services that benefit low-income families with children.

- As a follow-up initiative to the *1996 World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, Canada initiated the development of *Stolen Innocence*, a national education campaign against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

- Canada is also working with Save the Children Canada on an initiative called *Out of the Shadows and into the Light* to address the commercial sexual exploitation of girls and boys by increasing public awareness of the realities of the problems facing these young people, by assisting them in leaving the sex trade and by deterring other youth from entering the sex trade.

- The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) and the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) are programs that help some of the most vulnerable children overcome difficulties that limit their opportunities in life. CAPC funds community coalitions to establish and deliver services that address the developmental need of children aged 0 to 6 years. CPNP is a comprehensive program designed to provide food supplementation, nutrient counselling, support, and referral to pregnant women who are most likely to have unhealthy babies. AHS is an early intervention program, designed in consultation with local Aboriginal groups, that involves parental and the Aboriginal community in the design and implementation of preschool projects promoting Aboriginal culture, language, education, health, nutrition, parental involvement and social support.

- Government programs such as the Youth Employment Strategy and Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy help youth get the work experience, knowledge and skills they need to prepare for and work in the labour market. Projects directed at young women support training and work experience in science and technology trades, entrepreneurial training and start-up internships and skill development for youth-at-risk and teen parents.

- The Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, funded by the Government of Canada, have a number of initiatives addressing the health of adolescent girls including the benefit of recreation, eating disorders and the media, and access to sexual health services.

- The Government of Canada has provided support to a range of NGOs to undertake initiatives related to the girl-child in area such as non-traditional science and

technology occupations, sexual exploitation, violence prevention, empowerment and self-advocacy, and communication through the Internet.

- Canada also amended the *Criminal Code* to make it an offence to communicate for the purposes of obtaining a child prostitute, allowing police decoys to be used in laying charges. Bill C-51 received Royal Assent in March 11, 1999.

Around the World

- Canada is a strong supporter of children and children's rights. For example, Canada played a leading role in the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989 and co-chaired the first World Summit for Children in 1990, which recognized the urgent situation with respect to the girl child.

- The issue of war-affected children is a key priority within Canada's human security agenda. Canada recognizes that girls experience conflict differently than boys and strives to ensure these differences are integrated into international discussions. For example, at the Conference on War Affected Children in West Africa, co-hosted by the governments of Ghana and Canada in April 2000, governments recognized the need to ensure overall protection of girls; to ensure that military training incorporates gender-sensitivity; and the need to structure social service infrastructures to care for the specific needs of girl soldiers and war-affected girls.

- The need to pay special attention to the experiences and needs of girl children and adolescents affected by war will be a key priority for Canada at the International Conference on War-Affected Children which Canada will host in Winnipeg, Manitoba from September 13-17, 2000.

- Canada played an active role in the development and conclusion of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2000. The main objective of the Optional Protocol is to raise the minimum age for conscription and for participation in hostilities to 18. The Preamble of the Optional Protocol recognizes the special needs of children who are particularly vulnerability to recruitment or use in hostilities due to their sex.

- In February 1997, Canada ratified the *Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption* which will assist in preventing the abduction, sale or trafficking of children. In addition, Canada was instrumental in the development of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2000. The main objective of the Optional Protocol is to clearly define what constitutes sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to ensure protection of child victims. The Preamble of the Optional Protocol explicitly recognizes that girl children are disproportionately represented among the sexually exploited.

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supports a range of programs addressing particular challenges faced by girls, including:

  - a drop-in centre for girls in Bolivia; awareness programs on the commercial sex trade for girls and their families in northern Thailand; and a conference on sexual exploitation that brought together former child sex workers and youth-serving organizations and experts across the Americas;

  - special programs for child workers in countries from India to Nicaragua and a variety of programs for girls in education, skills training and self-esteem support help to reduce girls' vulnerability and dependence;

  - a project in Kenya providing an alternative to FGM which involves the education of girls in their future roles as adults and a community ceremony of music and theatre to mark their passage to adulthood; and

  - HIV-AIDS education and awareness programs in Sub-Saharan Africa to help girls protect themselves, and in several areas of Uganda and Kenya where new HIV-AIDS infections have decreased. Young women who act as peer educators implement many of these programs.